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ANKERWICK CASTLE.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.



BY

MRS. CROFFTS.

LET VIRTUE TRIUMPH.



VOL. III.

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ANKERWICK CASTLE.



CHAP. I.

IT will be necessary to give the reader the character of Mrs. Marchmont, as she will make a conspicuous figure in the remainder of this history.

This lady was the daughter of a General Officer of distinguished character and great merit, and nearly allied to the noble House of Belmore. General Marchmont had early married to please himself; the worth and beauty of his choice did him honour, and bound by still stronger ties the friendship

that subsisted between the Earl and Countess of Belmore and him. Domestic happiness attached him to home ; those hours that, prior to his marriage, were spent in the usual way of people of his rank and profession, deprived Lord and Lady Belmore of much more of his company than they wished. Now that he became happily domesticated, there were more opportunities for a daily intercourse ; and the addition of wit, good sense, and propriety in the person of Mrs. Marchmont, caused a mutual wish between the two families of not separating, and they rarely were asunder.

Lord Belmore had three daughters ;— General Marchmont one, the lady whose history we are now about to record. We shall pass over her infant years, and introduce her at the age of twelve, the darling of her parents : she was born the same day, and nearly the same hour with her cousin, the eldest daughter of Lord Belmore, and was eight years older than his Lordship's
youngest

youngest daughter, Lady Amelia, who was an infant, a plaything to Miss Marchmont. The person of this young lady was very pleasing, and her manners the most insinuating. She was a wonderful good mimic, in which she was encouraged by the General, who received infinite entertainment from her powers in that way. These, she very early perceived, obtained an ascendancy over him that was astonishing, and therefore she exerted them more in his presence than at any other time. Indeed her whole study seemed to be that of pleasing him.

Mrs. Marchmont would have early suppressed this inclination in her daughter, but it afforded such universal entertainment, and such delight to the General, that she gave up any contention, though very reluctantly ; for when she had pointed out her ideas, which were founded on reason and reflection, and convinced him she was right, a sally of well-timed pleasantry from Miss Marchmont dispelled, in a moment, all his

B 2

resolutions,

resolutions, and the work was to be gone over again. She therefore gave it up all together, and with years the propensity increased and improved to so great a degree, that at the age of seventeen and eighteen she was generally considered the most agreeable girl in the world, and her company sought after by the gay and thoughtless of both sexes with the greatest avidity; while the serious and more thinking part of her acquaintance foresaw the disadvantages accruing to herself, and secretly condemned the encouragement that had been given to so dangerous and destructive a talent.

About this time her father introduced the son of his deceased brother, who had been sent to France, under the care of a friend, at a very early age, to be instructed in the language, and educated for the army. The motive was economy, education being much cheaper there than in England; for this young man had nothing left but his profession, his father having dissipated the whole of his fortune.

The

The young Frederic Marchmont was what most gay, dissipated young men are, thoughtless, extravagant, and vain; he received his first ideas in a country where frivolity and foppery are the striking features of the national character, of which he lost nothing, and retained it to the end.—His person was handsome; he was surpassed by few in vigour and bodily strength; and it was rather extraordinary that he possessed these with a person delicately made, and a gentleness of manner almost incompatible with strength. He fenced in a masterly manner, danced well, managed his horse in the first style, dressed and talked well; but here his accomplishments ended; he knew nothing more. This was sufficient to recommend him to the notice of the female world; his narrow circumstances induced the General to bring him to his house, where he was at no expence, and where he received all the affection and attention possible: he had his uncle's finest horses to ride, and a groom to attend him.—

The liberal presents he received prevented his being obliged to spend any of his own money upon either dress or public places, and we find him an inhabitant of Golden-Square for ten months. He was taught to treat his cousin as his sister, and often heard the ideas of both his uncle and aunt concerning family connections, which tended to give both the young people a caution, as they held it against nature that such near relatives should marry.

How futile are sometimes our best endeavours, how unwise our best regulated plans! Frederic, the first moment he saw his cousin, loved her person, and was afterwards charmed with her pleasantry. His manner and appearance suited her, and there was a mutual exchange of hearts without consideration or premeditation. They played, danced, sung, and rode on horseback together; they called each other brother and sister, and, from the encouragement they received from General and Mrs. Marchmont,

Marchmont, they loved without restraint. Free, open, and volatile, their conduct gave such security, that a partiality, other than what a brother or sister ought to feel, never once occurred to the General or his Lady, or to any of the family of Lord Belmore. He romped in the same way with his other cousins, so that all were perfectly at rest.

Miss Marchmont, though so universally admired, never had had a serious proposal of marriage ; which often surprised the elder branches of the family. Lady Louisa, who was exactly her age, had had many, and was lately married, and gone abroad. The second sister, Lady Betty, had also had many, but her health was delicate, and she was not pressed by her friends to make an early establishment. The lovely Amelia, beautiful as a cherub, was the darling of all who knew her. Her innocence and refined understanding won the affections of all ; her gentleness and sweetness of temper made every one her friend ; and though she had no

talent for satire or mimicry, she was delighted with her cousin, and preferred her company, from infancy, to any other. She loved her better than her sisters, and all her little childish afflictions were reposed in the bosom of her friend. If she broke a tea-cup, tore her frock, displeased any of her masters, or was corrected by her governess, she invariably fled for consolation to her cousin, where she was sure to find what she sought, and by whom she was always comforted and caressed.

The power therefore Miss Marchmont had over her was uncommon ; it grew with her growth, and strengthened with her strength. She loved also her cousin Henry really like a brother ; she would sit on his knee, pat his fine red cheeks, and tell him he was her own beautiful brother, and that she loved him in her heart.

Frederic's regiment was ordered for Ireland ; the separation between the lovers
was

was felt, but a promise of leave of absence given to the General, after he had remained a specified time there, soon reconciled them to it. The week before he set out, with all the unthinking folly of his character, he told Miss Marchmont he would shoot himself if she did not marry him; and taking out a pistol, in a retired part of Kensington Gardens where they were walking, vowed most solemnly he would that instant die at her feet, if she refused his reasonable request.

“Could you suppose,” said he, “I would thus calmly leave you if I had not settled finally with myself every point and particular: all is ready—your compliance only is wanting; Mr. R——, my friend, will tie the knot, and Charlotte shall become my charming bride.”

Marrying her cousin never once entered the head of Miss Marchmont—seduction never into that of Frederic; she was a libertine in principle, but her libertinism had

method in it. She was much given to the goods of this life; she liked a fine house, fine equipage, and sumptuous entertainments. Dress was her ruling passion next to admiration. With Frederic all this must be given up;—she loved him, but despised his fortune; she did not like to forego her fondness for appearances; she would have married a dotard that could have supported her extravagance, and at the same time encouraged as many male friends as opportunity would allow, could she once have had the sanction of a husband. Frederic would have been happy without the incumbrance of a wife.

All this passed the observation of the giddy lover; he thought of his cousin only as a wife, to which he pressed her with the ardour natural when we wish to gain a favourite point. All his eloquence was in vain; she laughed at the idea of becoming his wife, and ridiculed the thought of his destroying himself; and taking out her fan, which

which by accident she had in her pocket since the preceding evening, she in a moment converted it into a pistol, and so exactly imitated his voice and tragical transport, the fan presented to her breast, and with such an inimitable grace cried—"Fire," that in the ecstasy of pleasure she had thrown him into, he clasped her round the waist, and imprinted a thousand kisses on her lips and neck. Those kisses had something magical in them; for, on his again pressing her to become his wife, she yielded to his entreaty, and, instead of going to her carriage, to return, she sent it home, and getting into a hackney-coach, drove to the house of Mr. R——, who, according to appointment, having witnesses prepared, the ceremony was read about three o'clock, and at near six, the dinner hour, she returned to Golden-Square a wife.—She was received with all the fondness she could desire.

"My beloved Charlotte," said the General, "you have taken a great deal of

exercife ;—have you taken good care of her, Frederic ? I hope my love has an appetite. I fear you will not be able to accompany your mother to Lady D——’s rout to-night ?”

“ Oh my dear Sir !” returned Mifs Marchmont, though there was nothing farther from her thoughts, “ I think, after I dine, I fhall be quite well, though I believe I walked an hundred miles ; but the beauty of the gardens, and the finenefs of the day, induced me to continue my walk till I am really half dead ; but I know, when I ref ref myfelf a little, I fhall be quite well enough to go to Lady D——’s rout, which I would not lofe for half a hundred worlds.”

“ No, no,” faid Mrs. Marchmont ; “ indeed you muft not think of it ; Frederic will ftay with you till ten o’clock, when I fhall return, and relieve him ; for that is his hour for fhewing himfelf : and you fhall get to bed by eleven, and to-morrow I hope we fhall fee no more remains of fatigue.”

“ It

“ It is very unfortunate,” said Frederic, “ that I heard there is to be a dance ; and having engaged Lady Betty, I shall be quite in despair at disappointing her.”

“ Oh never mind that,” said the General ; “ I will see that she is not disappointed in the first dance, and about ten she shall be disengaged for you ; so do stay with poor Charlotte.”

This arrangement the married pair seemed to agree to with a very ill grace ; and with many assurances from Mrs. Marchmont that she would relieve him from his confinement by ten o'clock, they departed for Lady D——'s rout. Two servants coming in with tea, Frederic begged his cousin would excuse him, as he had a particular friend to meet by appointment at the Mount Coffee-house, and to make his apology to his uncle for sleeping out that night. He called for his hat, and was let out by the footman ; the door was shut, and Charlotte, now Mrs. Marchmont, sat down, and drank her tea, which

which was soon over. Young Marchmont had a key to the street-door, and let himself in when he knew all the servants were engaged, and stole up to Charlotte's chamber. At a little after eight her maid attended, and put her to bed. She begged her mother would not disturb her, for that she found herself so fatigued, she would restore her spirits by sleep. That part of the house was kept perfectly quiet; and when Mrs. Marchmont returned, she was glad to find her daughter so prudent, yet thought she would scold the ill-natured Frederic for leaving her sweet child, and not even staying with her to drink tea. She regretted she had gone out; and not finding herself very well, she went to bed, ordering that Miss Marchmont's maid should wait till her Lady rang her bell, and on no account disturb her till then.

Young Frederic, letting himself in at any hour he pleased, made every thing easy to the new-married couple, and it was
twelve.

twelve o'clock the following noon when things were so adjusted in Charlotte's room, and Frederic safe in the closet, that the summons for the Abigail brought her into her Lady's chamber, who recorded all the directions she had received, in excuse for her not having been at her door at the usual hour, which did not seem sufficient to appease the angry Charlotte; she ordered her breakfast in the dressing-room which joined the closet, and hearing the General and his Lady were gone out in the coach, she gave some commissions to her maid, which would keep her out till near dinner time, and complaining of being famishingly hungry, a large breakfast was provided, and shared with the happy prisoner. They remained together until three o'clock; and Frederic's chamber being near Charlotte's, he crept softly to it, and rang the bell for the hair-dresser. The servants concluded he had just come in; and her maid returning, attended to dress her Lady for dinner, company being that day engaged.

“ Pray,” asked Charlotte carelessly, “ has Mr. Frederic never returned ? It was monstrous his not staying even till I drank my tea last night.”

“ No doubt,” said the Abigail, “ Mr. Frederic spent his time more agreeably ; I heard nothing of his being in the house ;—but to be sure he will soon be here now, for all the servants will have it he is very fond of Lady Betty, and all my Lord’s family dine here to-day.”

Charlotte by this knew all was safe, and she contrived to elude all suspicion for a whole fortnight, by pretending illness, and never going out, or breakfasting with the family ; she managed to give Frederic an excellent *dejeuné* every morning, he bringing from a confectioner whatever they both liked best ; as the destruction of so much rolls and butter would have caused a wonder that would have been productive of mischief.

At

At last the time of his departure, with his regiment, for Ireland arrived, and in the last state of misery he tore himself from his beloved Charlotte, who was in no less grief; he was to be three months away, and he deposited the key of the street-door with his charming bride, with many injunctions to be careful of it till his return, as by that alone his future interviews were to be carried on. The gaiety of Charlotte, after the loss of her companion, redoubled; she went out more, and appeared happier than ever.—Mr. Temple, who has been before mentioned, saw her, the day after the departure of Frederic, on horseback; and being in company with a gentleman of her acquaintance, was introduced, and they rode to Richmond together.

Charlotte was delighted with the satire and vivacity of Mr. Temple; they set off each other's powers, and kept the other gentleman in fits of laughter during the whole

whole ride. When they parted, Charlotte sighed.

“Why did I marry that foolish cousin of mine?” said she; “Temple is the only man I could with propriety have chosen from among mankind for my lord and master.”

They met that night at Drury-Lane, and the night following at a private ball. They danced, they talked together, they loved; and so rapidly did they improve every opportunity, that in ten days after the first of their meeting, she reposed the secret of her marriage in his breast, and had the pleasure of hearing his rage, his distress. She was the only woman on earth he could have thought to have made Mrs. Temple. What could she have proposed to herself by marrying a man without a guinea, while his whole fortune should have been totally at her disposal? Few men, of the most exalted rank, were equal to her merit, where wit, beauty, all were concentrated. He feigned so

so well, and acted his part with so much judgment, that Charlotte thought herself lost. Temple's fortune was large; he pleased her fancy; he would have become her husband; though that idea never would have been hinted at by him, had she not informed him she was already married;—all threw her into despair, and she thought of poor Frederic as the only bar to her felicity.

Temple worked on her feelings by his apparent unhappiness; and as she described the manner of her marriage, and how she and Frederic contrived to be together unknown to the family, he sighed, and took her hand.—“Happy key!” said he.—She blushed; she did not withdraw her hand; she sighed;—he urged, with all his rhetoric, to be admitted in the same way; and it was settled that the next day she should meet him on horseback in the King's road, and deposit the key in his keeping.—
Suffice

Suffice it to say, the meetings of Mr. Temple and Charlotte were carried on with so much adroitness, that they were never discovered ; and that, in exchange for the valuable deposit of the key of the street-door of General Marchmont's house in Golden-Square, the prudent Charlotte received, a pocket-book containing two thousand pounds. It is confidently asserted, so great was her power over Mr. Temple, that from time to time he lavished on her as much more in cash, besides innumerable presents of very considerable value ; which money she deposited in the funds, and managed it so well as to increase her stock exceedingly.—She was an excellent economist ; she loved to get money, but could not bear to part with it.—All intrigues require a confidant ; Charlotte's was a lady of very chaste morals, about fifty years of age, who had been her governess, and who almost lived at the General's.

Charlotte,

Charlotte, finding herself in a situation that required secrecy, informed Frederic, and advised him to remain with his regiment, as a discovery might cause the death of her dear mother, who was in a very declining state of health, and whose first wish was a good establishment for her, and Frederic the last person in the world she would wish her married to.

About this time Lady Betty Marchmont's health became very bad ; and Lord Belmore was advised, by medical men of great ability, to take her to the South of France, as the only means of recovery. This step was immediately taken, and poor Lady Amelia felt all the horrors of a separation from her friend, Miss Marchmont, whose ascendancy over her was astonishing. The day before the departure of the Belmore family, Charlotte told the whole secret of her marriage to Lady Amelia, now only just fourteen.

“ Reconcile

“ Reconcile yourself, my love,” said this artful woman, “ to the present arrangement of this foreign tour, and think how much happier you are than your unfortunate friend, who is thus doomed to live separate from the idol of her soul, and whose situation demands the strictest secrecy and care to save her from utter ruin.

She clasped the lovely girl round her neck, and wept bitterly. From what source those tears flowed we cannot exactly say;—but tears she did shed into the bosom of innocence and purity; and while she wrung the hands of her youthful companion, she received the most sincere assurances of secrecy and eternal regard.

“ Remember, my best love,” said Charlotte, “ I expect your friendship through life; I have no prospect of happiness but from my Frederic and my darling Amelia.”

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE parting between the Earl's family and the General's was truly affecting. Mrs. Marchmont's life was visibly every day approaching to its end. These real friends parted never more to meet. A very short time after this separation she died happy; for she was in ignorance of the character of a daughter who, next to her husband, was the object she most adored. The General, whose love had been constant, and his affection sincere, gradually declined; he had no consolation but in the company of his beloved daughter, whose attention to him was unremitting. A loose dress, and apparent illness and distress, saved her from discovery,

covery, though in the seventh month of her pregnancy, and she proposed to him a journey into ——— shire, where her governess had a sister, a widow, who was an *accoucheuse*, and where, without the least danger of discovery, she could retire when her time came, and the General be deceived by her keeping her room, while she would be obliged to remain out of the house.— This would require very little skill; for she had studied her father's disposition, and suited herself so exactly to it, that she could lead him to do any thing, except consent to a match with her cousin; and as she saw the ravages that grief was making on him, she was determined to keep her marriage a secret, that after his death she might act as occasion required.

All turned out conformable to her wish; she was safely delivered of a fine boy in the house of Mrs. Norton, not ten miles from Ankerwick Castle. The General imbibed a great share of the decline his lady died of,
and

and in ten months after, falling a victim to grief and disease, left Charlotte ten thousand pounds, and an estate of four hundred pounds per annum, with his house in town, furniture, plate, and equipage.

When all the funeral ceremony was over, a sufficient quantity of tears shed, and grief expended, she consulted her favourite Temple what was best to be done. As he still liked her, he had an invincible aversion to her husband's return; and as they were one day debating what was best to be done, the post brought a letter from Frederic, saying that he would be in London in a very short time, there to claim his charming wife.

This letter, filled with the warmest expressions of love and affection, brought nothing but disgust and alarm to the *amiable* Temple and his *chere amie*.

During the life of General and Mrs. Marchmont, the artful Charlotte contriv'd

to keep all the love of Frederic alive, and easily convinced him of the necessity of his remaining in Ireland; but the death of both set her so effectually at liberty, that nothing could be advanced to procure his longer stay, that could reasonably be supposed to gain credit with him; and as his temper was warm, and his God was honour, Temple sometimes felt a few twitches that pointed out to him his situation was critical, and required great conduct to steer exactly between his love and his fear: for so religious and pious was this worthy young man, that he held duellists in the greatest abhorrence. He thought it a most heinous sin to take the life of his fellow-creature, and had a most insurmountable and inherent dislike to run the risk of his own. This trait in his character, however, he kept a profound secret from the world; and so deceived it, that he was in general thought the soul of honour.

The

The greatest adepts in falsehood and deception will sometimes find themselves inadequate to arrange, with a sufficient degree of plausibility, so many difficult points as assailed those lovers, some of which were so obstinately in the way of accommodation, as shut out all hope of concealment; for though the critical death of Mrs. Marchmont, and the pliability of the General's temper to all the views and wishes of his beloved daughter, saved her from detection with her first child,—a husband, jealous of his honour, and alive to all the delicate and refined feelings of that character, could not be deceived; and Charlotte was now so increased in size, that a second visit to her friend, Mrs. Norton, in the neighbourhood of Ankerwick Castle, could not long be delayed.

Such was the consternation those several difficulties threw this happy pair into, that many days passed before they came to any resolution. Temple still loved Charlotte to
c 2 distraction;

distraction; he could not bear the thought of giving her up; it was almost as bad as meeting her husband. He debated with himself whether it would not be prudent to carry her off, and live till he was tired of her on the Continent, and then make her over to some other, or leave her; but then Frederic might trace him. Then his piety came to his aid.—“Could I take away the life of a fellow-creature?” was his ejaculation. He then thought of leaving Charlotte to brave the fury of her husband alone, and quit the kingdom himself; his love for her forbade it, and yet this last plan had gained considerably on him.

Charlotte's mind became distracted; all hitherto in her life had been according to her own desires. This was the first opposition to her will, and she bore it like a tigress.—She hated Frederic; she thought of him as her only bar to real happiness;—and such was the violence of her passion for
Temple,

Temple, that she was miserable when he was a moment out of her sight.

“Oh!” said she, “with what pleasure would I administer a bowl of poison to this busy fool,” tearing Frederic’s letter in pieces, and stamping it under her feet, “who thus robs me of happiness, of all my future and present good!”

In all the strength of colouring regret affords the imagination, she painted her sufferings to Temple.

“Dry up these tears,” said she, “the violence of my love for you bids thus to flow. Save me from that wretched boy, or this,” taking out a dagger from her bosom, “shall ease me of the tortures I am no longer able to bear.”

Temple, shocked at her violence, wrested the dagger from a hand Nature had formed too delicately to oppose, with any hope of

success, the nervous arm of her lover; and pressing her to his heart, quieted the tumult that opposition would only have increased: but the scene struck on the senses of Temple like a peal of thunder, and his coward soul shrunk from the embraces of a woman who had thus laid open her vicious heart.—

He left her with well-dissembled affection, resolved never to see her more. Poison and daggers haunted his weary imagination;—sleep refused the refreshment he expected from his pillow, and it was far advanced in the morning of the following day when Somnus visited, with unquiet and dreadful visions, his disturbed and restless soul.

Charlotte, consoled first by Temple, and after his departure soothed by her faithful governante, enjoyed a calmer rest; but morning again brought all the rage, distress, and lamentations of the former day. She never rose till noon, and under the semblance of grief for the loss of the General, she neither admitted visits, nor went abroad; so that the world,

world, nor even one of her domestics, had the slightest suspicion of her connection with Temple, or her situation. She wore a long loose dress, which prevented her shape being observed even by her maid, so well was every thing contrived.

Temple was irresolute ; he feared to awaken her jealousy or hatred, and he, ever cautious and prudent, determined to dissemble, and break the connection with as much safety to himself as possible ; but poison represented to many dangers in every thing that approached him under her roof, that he was resolved to feign illness, and eat no more of the delicacies that were always prepared for him at the usual hour. The next night, therefore, that he found himself in Charlotte's elegant apartment, who was by this time so much set at rest by the sage counsels of the wise governante, who had formed a plan to delude the unfortunate husband, that Charlotte, recollecting that she had opened her heart a little too freely

to her gallant, persuaded him, with such admirable address, that she was out of her senses for the moment, which was affirmed by the crafty governante, that Temple, from loving the object that thus wished to impose on him, credited whatever was told him, and partook of the supper and wines, without ever once reflecting that Nature, in all her wonderful productions, gave to man a plant, from which so pernicious a drug as poison could be extracted.

A second letter from Frederic, dated from Dublin, mentioned that his business would be concluded in a few days, and that he hoped, at the end of ten, he should embrace his beloved Charlotte; and begged that his dear boy might be sent for from the country to the house of his friend Mr. R——, that he might see him the very day of his arrival. He said he was engaged to a private ball the night of the day he wrote, where he was to dance with the beautiful Lady Louisa Fitzgerald, the admiration o
all

all the world ; but that his Charlotte was all to him, and Lady Louisa would have perhaps, of all the men in the room, the dullest partner.

The inventive genius of the governante had arranged matters so that every thing promised success, and the day Marchmont was expected, Charlotte's rib had been broken ;—a surgeon appeared properly instructed ; she was swathed up, and could not move out of one posture ;—her domestics were all greatly concerned, thinking it to be real. She was to have a fever, and all the concomitants of a fracture, by which all was to be concealed. Temple's nocturnal visits were suspended, and many days after the tenth elapsed without bringing any account of Frederic. Temple again appeared, and they began to think there was some mistake : his illness, or business, or any thing else it pleased the Fates to bring upon the head of the unfortunate husband, would have brought joy to his infamous wife, and

not much less satisfaction to the pusillanimous Temple. In this uncertain situation they remained several days, when Charlotte received a letter by the post;—she knew not the hand.

“It is from Ireland,” said she to the gover-nante; “who knows, ye Gods! perhaps this fool is no more!”—She opened the letter—expectation beat high; she sighed at what she thought the fallacious hope of the death of a faithful and affectionate husband;—she read—joy sparkled in her eyes.—“He is gone,” said she, clasping the hand of the governante, “and I am the happiest woman upon earth!”—She now gave a loose to her joy.—“Oh!” said she, “that Temple was here, that his dear mind should be relieved from the load of pain and uncertainty he is in! How tardy will the hours move on till we meet!”

“Moderate, dear Madam,” said the able adviser; “conceal all this joy from Mr. Temple. Recollect the poison; it seemed.

seemed to operate wonderfully on the mind of your lover. You married that sweet fellow that is gone, for love ; Temple will naturally fear you, and doubt your love for him to be real. Work upon his feelings ; perhaps he may now do your violent love for him justice, and make you his wife !”

This, however, was a wish the very farthest from the heart of the governess ; she dreaded nothing more than a marriage, for both Temple and Charlotte were very liberal to her ; and self-interest strongly pointed out to her it was not her business to join them legally together.

Charlotte approved of the advice of her friend ; and at the hour she expected Temple, she threw herself into a proper degree of sorrow. She had made an application to her eyes, which caused an appearance of great inflammation from tears ; and she so well and so naturally put on the semblance of sorrow, that Temple was completely duped by it.

“Here,” said she, “is an account of poor Frederic’s death; he died with firmness, as became his profession and his name. Oh! how I have injured him! Never shall I know peace more!”

The governante, who was present, could hardly compose her risible faculties; she hemmed twice, put her handkerchief to her eyes, and turned from her dear Lady. Mr. Frederic was a brave man, she said. Charlotte now really wept. Temple threw down the letter;—he took Charlotte by the hand tenderly.

“Grieve not thus, my love!” said he.

“Ah, Temple!” said she, “you must hate, despise, detest the woman who has basely betrayed the best, the most faithful, the kindest husband; read that letter of his friend Colonel Edwards, and reflect on his kindness to the worthless Charlotte.”

Colonel

Colonel Edwards had written in high panegyric of the gallantry of Captain Marchmont, who had been sent out with a party of his men against those deluded people called Whiteboys, whose numbers exceeded all idea; and though the handful of men, commanded by Captain Marchmont, cut to pieces hundreds, and took the leaders prisoners, a violent cut on the head brought down the gallant Frederic, and which, after some days, proved mortal. During the interval preceding his death, he disclosed every circumstance of his marriage to his friend Colonel Edwards, and recommended his dear little boy strongly to his care.

Temple found it impossible to comfort or console Charlotte; she absolutely refused his visits, and left such an impression on his mind of her real sorrow for her husband, as totally banished the bad impressions of the poison she was so ready to administer to him in her rage;—so that he concluded she had really, from distress, lost for a moment

moment the power of reason, and that she, unknown to herself, had a latent affection for Frederic, that his loss alone was able to shew her. She kept on the farce so well until her return from her friend, Mrs. Norton's, where she left to her care another fine boy, that Temple was so completely outwitted, that he despaired of ever again living with her on the same terms. Her scheme was marriage; but she was prudent enough to keep the governante in ignorance of this. On her return to Golden-Square, she was acknowledged for the widow of her late cousin; she appeared in weeds, and deep affliction for his loss.

Temple still loved her passionately; and when time had meliorated a little of the poignancy of her feelings, she became ten times more witty and agreeable than ever, and was still more charming in the eyes of Temple:—but time shewed her he would never marry her; for though he pressed her to admit his visits as usual, he never once hinted.

hinted at matrimony. She had now appearances to keep up; she had no longer the death of a father, mother, or husband to mourn; no excuse to lock herself up from the world in case a third visit to Mrs. Norton should prove necessary; and this consideration alone had weight enough to withstand the pleasure of the society of the man she loved to a degree of extrayagance that was amazing. She received about this time a pressing invitation from Lord and Lady Belmore to join them at Florence, where Lady Betty's ill state of health obliged them to remain; and also such a letter from Lady Amelia, that had Mrs. Marchmont any feeling, she would have set off to the assistance of her young friend. She entreated, in the most moving terms, that she would accept of the invitation, as her presence would save her from ruin; that she had been privately married, and had reasons so potent for the assistance of her dear friend, that her death must be the consequence of her refusal; that Mr. and Mrs. Baggot were to leave London

early in the next month, with their son and daughter, and that they would take care of her dear Charlotte until she was safe under the protection of Lord and Lady Belmore. This Mrs. Marchmont thought would forward her scheme on Temple; she made preparations for her intended tour, had it announced to all her friends, and agreed to take her *gouvernante* with her.

Temple was quite distracted at this arrangement; he could not go abroad, nor would she permit him, he well knew, to be one of her party if it had been possible for him at that time to quit the kingdom. In this dilemma he took the only means to gain admittance once more, which was calling on her one morning with two or three ladies; and, on their leaving the room, he missed his glove, and running back up stairs for it, he presented a letter to Charlotte, in which were bills for one thousand pounds. As she reached out her hand to receive the letter, he caught it, and pressed it to his lips.

“Will

“ Will you send the answer to this letter,” said he, “ to the old place ?”

She replied, “ Yes ;” and that night, so powerful an effect has money, the gover-nante conveyed him safe into her patroness’s presence at eleven o’clock.

The young Frederic, her son, had been brought up to her house ; he was now near three years old, and she determined to take him with her to Florence. She appeared very fond of him, though that she really was so, was a dubious point. Temple would by no means consent to her leaving England, and she was too much given up to him to dispute it. It was therefore resolved that she should excuse herself to Lord and Lady Belmore ; and her little boy opportunely taking the small-pox, which was known to Mr. and Mrs. Baggot, it was apology sufficient.

The misfortunes of the beautiful, the distressed Amelia awakened a feeling in the breast

breast of Mrs. Marchmont that was more than pity—it was a feeling more congenial to the heart of avarice and self-interest.—Lady Amelia's woman had died ; and Lady Belmore requested Mrs. Marchmont would take over with her an Englishwoman, to wait on her daughter, as she preferred an Englishwoman to a foreigner. The gover-nante therefore was dispatched in place of Mrs. Marchmont herself, who, though she was a native of France, her long residence in England did away Lady Amelia's objection ; and her birth was looked over in the greater perfections so highly coloured by Mrs. Marchmont.

Lady Amelia was soon obliged to repose that confidence in her she was so well qualified to be entrusted with. Mrs. Norton was also thought a very necessary addition ; and in three months after their arrival at Florence, Lady Amelia, through their means, brought into the world, without the least discovery or suspicion, a charming boy, which

who was consigned to the care of Mrs. Norton ; and when it was thought old and strong enough to travel, Lady Amelia purposely, as was agreed on, quarrelled with the governante, who was sent back to England at the expence of Lord Belmore.

The Nobleman, whom Lady Amelia had privately married, when he found the necessity of parting with his child, went secretly to the house of Mrs. Norton ; and after bestowing upon it the tenderest careffes, he stripped its little back, and, by a peculiar secret, he marked certain letters under its right side, that were scarcely perceptible until it should be rubbed with a particular liquid, which at any time of life would make visible the mark imprinted at the most tender age. He gave Lady Amelia an order on a London Banker for two thousand pounds, which was to be given to her friend Mrs. Marchmont for the necessary expenditure of the child ; and whatever further sums would be necessary, he would answer, recommending

mending his dear infant to the humane care of his beloved Amelia's friend. This sum was faithfully presented by the governante to Mrs. Marchmont ; and the liberality of this Nobleman to the two women who conducted all these matters, so well and amply satisfied them, that they returned highly pleased with their excursion to Florence.

Two thousand pounds was a very considerable sum in the eyes of Mrs. Marchmont, who, from the moment she received it, converted it to her own use. The poor Mrs. Norton, in about six months after her return, had the misfortune to break her leg ; and on Mrs. Marchmont's hearing it, she set off for her house, telling the governante that she must bring up the dear little Florentine to town, and that she would take her own maid with her, for whom she had particular business, so that it was impossible to take her to see her sister. Mrs. Marchmont had very powerful reasons why the governante

governante should not attend her ; and, in her visit to Mrs. Norton, every thing turned out quite to her satisfaction, the death of whom, occasioned by the fever brought on by the fracture, facilitated all her schemes on the son of her dear friend, Lady Amelia.

Mrs. Marchmont's connection with Mr. Temple lasted for some years after this period ; but, like all other connections of the same kind, time brought it to a conclusion ;—but such, and so many uncommon circumstances bound them to each other, that either self-interest or self-security made a lasting friendship indispensably necessary during the remainder of their lives. Whether this friendship can consistently be called Platonic, I will not assert ; but so little retrospection had either to the days of love, that they, making themselves happy with new engagements, neither wounded, or in the least affected the feelings of each other.

In

In point of circumstances, Mrs. Marchmont found herself perfectly easy ;—her love of money led her to the pursuit of increasing her original fortune ; she prided herself much on this talent, and found it gained her no small credit with the world. Her broker knew she had large sums in the funds ; her trades-people were regularly paid ; her domestics enjoyed plenty and peace ; her house was elegantly furnished ; her equipage superb ; her entertainments grand, agreeable, and of course well attended. What more could Mrs. Marchmont, or any other lady of high fashion, wish or desire ? While riches are possessed, and the goods they bring enjoyed, numbers I fear there are to be found too indifferent to the means by which they are acquired.

CHAP. III.

YEARLY accounts were regularly sent to Lady Amelia of the expenditure on the little Florentine ; and as secrecy was indispensably necessary, the income allowed to the person whose care he was in was very large ;—so that, between masters and physicians' fees, though she had the humanity never to write during the child's illness, but immediately on its recovery, there was seldom a lesser sum than five hundred pounds per annum accounted for ; and the noble father, for the proper maintenance and care of his darling and only son, sent another sum of two thousand pounds British to the faithful friend of his beloved Amelia.

At

At the age of nine years, or rather at the time the four thousand pounds ought to have been expended at the rate of five hundred pounds per annum, this worthy guardian apprized the unfortunate pair of the death of their child; and while their amiable hearts were torn by affliction for the supposed loss of their darling, Mrs. Marchmont put on a two months' grief for the benefit of the governante, who was in perfect ignorance of what really became of the infant after her sister Mrs. Norton's death; and was so plausible in the accounts she gave, seeming so very fond of the child, and read so many passages of letters she said she received from the worthy Clergyman, in whose care she had placed him, that the governante believed it all as faithfully as she did her creed. Indeed no person living was in the secret, which set Mrs. Marchmont perfectly at ease as to discovery; for at the time she took her own maid on the journey to Mrs. Norton's, she contrived to administer a dose that effectually prevented her being able to travel with her
Lady,

Lady, whose business was so urgent, that she left her in the care of the people of the Red Lion at Barnet, and found her, on her return, perfectly recovered, and able to attend her back to her house in Golden Square.

The expected arrival of the Belmore family in England made it absolutely necessary to apprise Lady Amelia of the death of her son. Had they remained longer abroad, it is doubtful whether Mrs. Marchmont would not have deferred the account till after the receipt of a few more thousands; but she was not fond of running risks. Prudence and foresight were striking traits in her character. Whether it was to this we are to attribute her sudden resolution of going abroad, or to a few twitches of conscience, if it be possible such a woman as Mrs. Marchmont could have really any conscience or monitor within, or to a disagreement that arose with her present lover, or to the result of consideration of convenience, or some secret concatenations of ideas that arose in her mind;

but certain it is she arrived in Paris on the very day Lord Belmore's family reached Ostend, on their way to England.

The wary Mrs. Marchmont, however, for once overshot her mark. This journey, which was attended with some expence and no profit, which threw her out of the life she was attached to, and the company of a man whom, though she had quarrelled with, she was yet fond of, was unnecessary ; for the unfortunate Lady Amelia could not leave a husband dear to her beyond conception, or return without him to her native land, where she could no longer hope to see the little idol of her soul, the parting with whom nearly broke the tender thread of life, and whose loss almost deprived her of existence. She therefore departed from her father's house privately with her noble spouse, whose family were even more against the connection than Lord Belmore. They kept their retreat a secret, nor has it ever yet transpired.

The

The melancholy circumstances attending the death of Lord Belmore's two sons, the recent decease of Lady Betty, after a tedious and severe illness, and the disaffection of Lady Amelia, almost broke down the Earl and his Lady, whose greatest pleasure seemed to rest on meeting Mrs. Marchmont and her son, who was now their heir.

The reader may judge, from his knowledge of Mrs. Marchmont, how very much chagrined she must have found herself, on being acquainted with all these circumstances. She had, however, gone as far as Nice before that happened, and she liked it so much, that she put off the impatience of her relatives for her return till the following spring. It was here she met Lord Seal's family ; and her friendship with Lady Mary Berkley, though then a mere girl, first commenced.

The death of Lord Belmore first called Mrs. Marchmont to England ; her son coming into all his fortune and title. This added

eclat to her, and she lived rather more unrestrained than before she went abroad ;— so that, at the period of Lady Mary Berkeley's residence in her house, we find her a character rather visited from the elegance of her entertainments, her wit, and agreeableness, than from that correctness which alone would have recommended her to the Devon family, for the protectress of Lady Mary.— Why Mrs. Marchmont should consent to her Ladyship's residing with her is something inconceivable. It was in many circumstances incongruous ; it was inconsistent with her plans, with her way of life, and marks more strongly her want of foresight and prudence than any other of her actions. We find hitherto that the tide ran rapidly in favour of all Mrs. Marchmont's undertakings ; it began to ebb from the moment Lady Mary became an inmate in her house ; and it now ran out as quickly as it before flowed in. If we wait the critical moment of the flood, good sense, and a proper confidence in ourselves, soon lead us to that success

cess we aim at, and to which we approach at every step; so, on the contrary, we advance to nothing faster than ruin, when once we are fairly entered on the road.

A quick and penetrating understanding aided and assisted Mrs. Marchmont in all her diabolical plans. Avarice deadened her ideas on the offer Lady Mary made her of five hundred pounds per annum, and a forfeiture of the like sum in case she wantonly quitted her house within the year. This was a bait too powerful for her to withstand, as she knew Lady Mary would not be an additional expence to her of fifty pounds per annum.

Temple, who was by this time a marked character even in the very first world, attached himself to her Ladyship; nor was it long before she fell an easy prey: but still Mrs. Marchmont, ever mindful of appearances, insisted on precaution. It was given out by mutual consent, that Temple was

paying his addresses to Lady Mary ; and this, in some degree, saved trouble, and sanctioned, for a time, his being openly in Golden-Square.

In this situation were affairs, when a very *mal-à-propos* accident obliged him to go into the neighbourhood of Mr. Williams, to whom he wrote that he would pass a few weeks with him. He found, some days after his arrival, that Mr. Williams had made a party to his hunting lodge, which he put off until Mr. Temple had finally concluded the business which brought him down ; and certain arrangements, which he found made for the Lodge, suited him so much, that he agreed to accompany his friend Williams there.

On their journey thither, he, by the accident of the carriage breaking down, as already related, was introduced at Waltham Castle, and there was fascinated by the charms of Mademoiselle M——. He returned
so

so much sooner than he intended, that he thought it absolutely necessary to persuade Lady Mary it was his impatience to see her that drove him again to town, from the most pleasant party he had ever been at: that he was so miserable from her presence, that nothing could make up to him the want of her society. He mentioned the accident that obliged them to go to the seat of Mr. Beaumont, and exerted all his powers of satire to throw every individual of that circle into the highest ridicule, and particularly the person who had engaged his attention most: poor Mademoiselle M—— came under the severest lash of his severity in the presence of Lady Mary. By this means he brought her to speak freely of the whole family:—she described, in the most ludicrous manner, the character of Lady Middleton; her virtues, her learning, her beauty, were all proportionably satirized.

“What ostentation,” said she, “are her charities! I never walked at Ankerwick

Castle, that I could persuade myself I was not in the environs of Greenwich or Chelsea Hospitals: at every step you meet some miserable old wretch, bowed down by age and infirmity, that throws you into the horrors: then perhaps a hundred yards farther on, your senses are stunned by the noise of numerous herds of charity boys playing for their amusement: then in your drives and rides, at every ten paces you meet some magnificent edifice, with inscriptions time has almost defaced, and which, from curiosity, or a want of something else to do, you strain your eyes out to pick up a word here and there; and after all your exertions, *Anno Dom.*—and John, Earl of Middleton—and William, tenth Earl of Middleton, is all you can make out. I have often wished that this proud family, that thus engages the wondering world by all this pompous humanity, had, for the convenience of all visitors to their grand palace, like myself, set their minds and eyes at once at rest, by collecting together all their buildings into a street,

street, and putting up a board on each, of royal purple ground, and large gold letters, such as haberdashers, milliners, &c. &c. make use of. This is the very first improvement I should recommend; for, in truth, immediately on my leaving Ankerwick Castle, I am obliged always to send to the old housekeeper at the Abbey for some healing eye-water, my optic nerves suffer so much during my stay there; and had I made frequent and long visits, I am convinced I should have been totally blind;—for in my own defence, I have been forced to live much out of doors; for what with that old cat, Mrs. Markham, Parson Selwin, and his hideous wife, Lord Lovesdale tuning his pipe to Mænalian strains, and Mr. Henry, the charity boy, with his wife maxims, I have fled as if from a prison, in pure pity to my senses, and have courted the melodious groves and starry heavens, rather than suffer annihilation from the eternal din of music, and topics religious and elegiac.”

“ Who is Mr. Henry, the charity boy, that annoys you so much with his wisdom ?” asked Mrs. Marchmont.

“ Why really, my dear,” said Lady Mary, “ I know nothing at all about him ; and what is much more extraordinary, his kind patroness, Gertrude, Countess of Middleton, is in equal ignorance. She selected him out of all the other charity boys, for reasons, I suppose, best known to herself. He is now, in the eyes of many, an extremely handsome young man, and that sentimental puppy, Beaumont, still suffers him to remain in his house ; but, *entre nous*, I am convinced the Marquis of Lovelsdale is at present the reigning favourite of her immaculate Ladyship ; they are *friends*,” she proceeded, with a loud laugh, in which the auditors most heartily joined.

It is an old maxim, and we are inclined to believe a very just one, that women of a certain description wish to bring all others to their own level. Mrs. Marchmont
caught

caught at the idea with avidity ; for she had already, for what reason we do not presume to guess, taken a most invincible dislike not only to Lady Middleton, but to every individual under her roof that she had already heard mentioned ; and such was the violent and unconquerable hatred that in a moment spread itself through her imagination, that oaks would sooner bear the downy peach, eagles bring forth doves, or tigresses the bleating lamb, than Mrs. Marchmont be reconciled to any of the House of Middleton.

There is nothing more pretended to than reason, yet nothing in which people of every rank and age are less agreed in. The temper, inclination, and circumstance cause so great an uncertainty, that the old reason not as the young, the happy not as the unhappy, the virtuous not as the vicious, though the point to be reasoned on is the same, and all may perhaps possess an equal share of understanding and reasoning powers. It so

happened with the trio in Golden-Square. Here was one point to reason on ; yet each differed from the other, each acted from such reasoning, and each found themselves wrong in the end.

Temple did not, in Lady Mary's account, get the least information of Mademoiselle M——, and he feared to particularize her ; for his schemes were deep, and Lady Mary the last person to be allowed to perceive them. He had recourse, however, to his old confidante and trusty friend, Mrs. Marchmont, whose ideas on the business were very foreign to those Temple wished them to be. She, however, dissembled ;—she sincerely wished the friend of Lady Middleton to be disgraced and abused, but she did not wish Temple to be the man by whom it was to be brought about. She had other schemes on him, in which Lady Mary was her object. Lady Ann Berkley's woman corresponded with Lady Mary's ; and, as weddings are fine topics for the pens of
Abigails

Abigails in general, it is to be supposed natural that it engaged their's, and that all the little incidents that happened at the Abbey were faithfully retailed through that channel to Lady Mary. Hence we must attribute the newspaper account of the skating party at the Abbey of Devon, and its consequences, with many others of the same nature in embryo.

The newspapers had now announced to the world the arrival of the wedding party at Mr. Beaumont's superb house in Piccadilly; and the town was in high expectation of seeing in Lady Middleton the mirror in which all excellence, beauty, and elegance were reflected. About half after two o'clock, on the 10th of January, Mr. Beaumont and Lady Middleton, in a post-chaise and six smoking bays, drove through Piccadilly, followed by a coach and six, with Lady Matilda, Mrs. Markham, and Mademoiselle M———; another with Lord and Lady Sandford, and Lord Lovelsdale

and Mr. Henry in the Marquis's travelling chaise.

This cavalcade, as was natural, engaged all eyes, and numerous crowds of spectators flocked to see them alight. They had travelled by easy stages, and every face was cheerful, save only Lord Loveldale's; the traces of affliction were too deeply marked to escape the observation of the most inattentive.

The Duke and Duchess of Somerton, and Mr. and Mrs. Selby, who were then on a visit to Somerton House, were previously engaged to dine the day of their arrival in Piccadilly; and that night the unfortunate Marquis was to quit, perhaps for ever, the roof that covered the idol he worshipped.—The next day, however, the whole party were to dine at the Duke's, and this in some measure kept up his spirits. He busied himself with his friend Henry, and was so fortunate as to have a fair prospect of getting
a com-

a commission in the regiment he wished ; but all was kept a profound secret, lest his family, who were now in the highest spirits, at the sure prospect of Lady Matilda's making an establishment extremely to their wish, should, sooner than was necessary, have cause for sorrow. The Duke and Duchess were the fondest parents, and in their two children had every blessing that children can bring.

Mr. Beaumont, the day after his arrival, presented Henry with a like sum to that Lady Middleton had settled on him—six thousand pounds ; and ordered every thing necessary for his convenience on his voyage and arrival in India that would be fit for his own son. Lady Middleton, the same day, intended for his acceptance five hundred pounds, as a small tribute of acknowledgment for the satisfaction his conduct gave her.

“ Your

“ Your own excellent understanding,” said she; “ your prudence and foresight, and, let me add, your virtue, leave nothing for me to speak to in my wishes for your future conduct; therefore I have only to add,” as she gave him the above sum in bank notes, “ that you will consider us as your sincere friends, and that, for our sakes, you will be careful of your life and health.”

Mr. Henry's soul was too big for utterance; he bowed his head on the hand of his noble and beloved benefactress, and, as usual, fled from her, to hide the manly sensibility that trembled in big drops on either eye. He had the happy and peculiar talent of shewing his gratitude; he put a due value upon every favour, and managed that nice distinction between thanks and servility with such admirable discrimination, as plainly proved it flowed spontaneously from the heart. His animated expressions, his sound sense, his manly beauty, noble deportment,

portment, and elegance of manner gained him from the world universal admiration.

The mental improvements of Mademoiselle M—— gave Lady Middleton real pleasure ; and she determined, during her stay in London, she should reap all the benefit possible from her residence there.— For this purpose solely she sent for Mr. and Mrs. Selwin, and devoted an equipage, attendants, and a particular apartment for their use, that, by going about with such instructors, she should see every thing, know its use, and glean information from all around her. Here, in the seat of science, with companions adequate to teach, and fond of explaining, her mind was kept alive to improvement. She was entertained and instructed without being fatigued ; and the progress she made shewed not only her own great abilities, but the learning and powers of those who directed and guided her literary pursuits. Lady Middleton's opinion coincided with Mr. Addison, who says—

“ It

“It is of the last importance to season the passions of a child with devotion, which seldom dies in a mind that has received an early tincture of it; though it may seem extinguished for a while by the cares of the world, the heats of youth, or the allurements of vice, it generally breaks out, and discovers itself again as soon as discretion, consideration, age, or misfortunes have brought the man to himself. The fire may be covered and overlaid, but cannot be entirely quenched and smothered.”

She therefore had her instructed by Mr. Selwin in sacred writings as well as profane, and was as carefully attended to in point of religion as Mr. Henry had been: she marked out, in consultation with Mr. Selwin, her wishes for her young friend, and a regular course was pursued for her information and instruction.

Lady Sandford, whose mind was prolific of all good, requested to be admitted of the party,

party, as intellectual acquirements were her chief delight ; and Mr. Henry, when he could, also attended. Every happiness seemed in store for Lady Sandford ; for her perfections taught her Lord his duty, her mild virtues won his whole love ; new force was given to his former passion ; she was more interesting, more pleasing, more charming, though perhaps less handsome ; and his heart yielded to, we almost say, a first love. He went to Lady Mary, by whom he was repulsed with scorn and derision.— She called him names too scurrilous to repeat ; he tried to soothe her, but in vain.— The Duke and Duchess of Devon, Lord Seal, and Lady Ann were all severally rejected, and she enjoyed the company of her Temple and her Mrs. Marchmont, and spurned from her all her real friends ; yet still, with all that virtue that belonged to them, they tried to keep her up in the world's eye, and even took notice of Mrs. Marchmont to give Lady Mary some respectability. This, though it gave Mrs. Marchmont

Marchmont the highest gratification to be taken by the hand by persons of such high rank and character, did not save them from the full lash of her satire, in which Lady Mary and Temple never failed to join.—The age of the Duke and Duchess of Devon, the plainness of Lady Ann Berkley, the stateliness of the affected proud Lady Middleton, the dove-eyed Marquis of Lovelace, the foolish and insipid Mademoiselle M——, and the self-sufficient arrogance of the charity-boy, were so many objects of ridicule and scandal, that their time was generally spent in mirth and laughter, at the expence of characters that each in their souls envied. All the acknowledged dignity of inborn sentiment, princely extraction, high rank, and splendid fortune of the House of Middleton could not awe this invidious trio; and each inwardly vowed to destroy, as far as was in their power, the domestic happiness of the charming Gertrude, and bring odium on all her favourites.

The

The young Frederic, Captain Marchmont's son, though whether he was his son is best known to Mrs. Marchmont, for, from the exact time of his birth, we are inclined to think he more properly belonged to Mr. Temple, as it was full eleven months after Captain Marchmont's departure for Ireland that Mrs. Norton had the good fortune to inform Mrs. Marchmont her newborn infant was a fine boy. However, be this as it may, the fine boy was called Frederic, and poor Captain Marchmont thought himself a father two full months prior to his Lady's becoming a mother; but to so excellent a manager as Mrs. Marchmont, difficulties such as these were things of no avail;—appearances were all on her side; and Mr. Temple had the satisfaction of reflecting that his illegitimate son, by the infamous Mrs. Marchmont, was, by their united abilities, the acknowledged Earl of Belmore, with a fortune of twenty-five thousand pounds per annum.

Temple

Temple secretly took under his care both the boy and as much of his fortune as Mrs. Marchmont allowed, she keeping up every appearance to Lady Belmore, and was really highly esteemed by that worthy woman; the young Lord paying him every respect and attention, as he was directed to do. Self-love and gross passions engrossed so much of Mrs. Marchmont, that there was hardly room for natural affection for a child, though that child belonged to her favourite lover. He was before his birth an unwelcome expectancy, and after he was born, both a trouble and expence. It was necessary, immediately on the death of Captain Marchmont, his supposed father, to treat him with an uncommon degree of tenderness and fuss; his deep mourning, and that of his maid, was critically proper for a father. She would press the image of her dear lost husband to her breast, and weep over him at a time she knew she was observed; but that universal healer of sorrows, the never-failing soother of anguish, Time, meliorated

meliorated her grief. The son of her lamented love was sent to school, and left there without that care or attention that tender mothers generally pay to their beloved offspring; but from the moment he was the Belmore heir, things changed: he then became once more the sun in which all her happiness rose and set; she could not live a moment out of his presence; he was immediately brought up to London, and put to Westminster School, where his doting mother visited him regularly every day, and where he was indulged by her in every thing he could wish or ask for. Her sole and anxious thoughts were to make herself as necessary and agreeable to him as she possibly could: not that we would wish to insinuate that this worthy woman had any motive for this conduct but natural affection; but she had the happy art of accomplishing every scheme she wished, and never succeeded better than in the present.

Her

Her son was, from inclination, wholly governed by her, and thought her the most pleasant woman in the world. He considered himself the happiest boy of his acquaintance; and having no great abilities, his health became the great care of his mamma; so that, instead of poring over musty books from morning till night, like other school-boys, the young Lord Belmore was driving to Richmond, riding in Hyde-Park; and as amusement to the mind is as exercise to the body, he was taken to plays and home routs, but always put to bed by eleven o'clock.

In short, so much attached to her charming son was she, that her example was considered the pattern for all fond mothers.—If any unpleasant occurrence, such as a quarrel with a lover, the rise or fall of stocks contrary to her wish, or any such melancholy catastrophe happened to lead her thoughts off from her daily care of his health, the idea of any accident which might affect his precious life, quickly brought her back to the
tender

tender duties of a parent, wisely considering that it would not only rob her of all the advantages of his rank and fortune, but that she must account to the next heir for the money expended, and also all dilapidations during his minority; and that the wealth which she was now accumulating to fill her own coffers, must be refunded. Also the being mother to the Earl of Belmore was a feather, and particularly to a woman situated as she was, that she would, with the utmost reluctance, give up: for though there are many things we must find fault with in this lady's disposition and principles, yet nevertheless we cannot help admiring a mind so productive of good to *itself*.

CHAP. IV.

WHEN Lady Middleton and her two friends, Lady Sandford and Mademoiselle M——, were presented by the Duchess of Devon at Court previous to the birthday, which was the first time they appeared in public, it is almost impossible to give a just idea of the admiration of the town.— In the beginning of this work, when we first introduced the lovely Gertrude to our readers, we observed her great height of stature and dignity of carriage, and in another place spoke of her likeness to Maria Antoinette of France. Whether this likeness struck the Court of St. James's, or whether Lady Middleton was the most transcendent

scendent beauty that had for ages been seen there, it is not for us to determine ; but the uncommon plaudits that broke from every tongue more forcibly spoke the ideas raised by her appearance, than the most masterly pen can describe.

The birth-night was crowded beyond what was ever before known. The public curiosity and wonder were raised ; those who had seen, wished to see again ; those who had not seen, went to see ; and such was the crowd, that accommodation could hardly be found in apartments all must allow are so incomparably suited to a brilliant Court.

The symmetry and majestic form of this divine woman peculiarly fitted her for a Court dress ; for those who had been in the habit of seeing her, and considering her as the most beautiful woman of the age, acknowledged they never beheld her to so much advantage before.

“Happy Beaumont!” was the universal exclamation, and for once the general opinion was right; for Beaumont was indeed happy: he had every thing to make him so, and a disposition to be sensible of it.—He was himself high in the world’s opinion, and very much admired for his manly beauty and grace. His wit was ready, his sense solid, his manner subduing; yet still Lady Middleton reflected honour on him, while her choice reflected also the highest on her.

It will not be thought out of place to say a few words of Mr. Henry, who was presented by the Duke of Devon. Majesty, ever quick at discerning merit, was struck with this young man, who was most graciously received, and most flatteringly noticed; and this circumstance seemed to give more real satisfaction to Lady Middleton than the gaze of the multitude on herself. Not that we wish to insinuate that she received no pleasure from such universal admiration;

admiration; a woman, without some degree of vanity, we consider an unnatural character: but in her's there was nothing out of nature.

It was unfortunate for Lady Sandford and Mademoiselle M——, that they were not first seen without such a blazing star as Lady Middleton. They were, however, particularized in a very marked manner, and by two certain people more admired.—Mr. Williams and Mr. Temple both were unwearied to gain their notice, but without effect; and Temple, for once, found himself in love with a woman who seemed to take no notice of him. Williams was as unsuccessful with Lady Sandford; and both these worthys were obliged to content themselves with hopes of future good, and very great present mortification and disappointment.

Williams had every thing prepared to astonish by his galas; and his sister, as we

have before mentioned, was every way suited to give them force. He had given one ball prior to the arrival of the person for whom all his expence was intended, which he contrived should find its way into the daily prints, to take off any mistrust from those conscience warned him might be suspicious. But he might have saved himself the trouble; for Mr. Williams and his arrangements could have very little effect on any member of the Middleton party.

Mr. Williams waited on Mr. Beaumont; the visit was returned according to the rules of etiquette; a grand *fête* was announced, but unfortunately Lady Middleton, &c. &c. sent an apology. Busy dissipation was not the ruling idea at the house of Mr. Beaumont, and the days spent in Piccadilly were thought infinitely more pleasant than those passed elsewhere; the Somerton family, and a chosen few, making up all they seemed to wish.

Mrs.

Mrs. Siddons took them once a week to the Theatre, and Lady Middleton had engaged herself to Mademoiselle M——— that she should go to a masquerade, which that charming girl longed to see; and the Duchefs of Somerton promised she should soon be gratified by one at Somerton House, a public masquerade not being concordant to the ideas of Mr. Beaumont or Lady Middleton;—and Lord Lovelsdale wished her Grace to be expeditious, as he dreaded the knowledge of his India scheme would totally unfit them for amusement, and though he wished to put off to the last moment the disagreeable information, it must soon be made: he therefore urged the masquerade, in pity, as he said, to Mademoiselle M———'s impatience.

Temple found no opportunity of ever speaking to Mademoiselle M———, and even very seldom saw her. These difficulties added a double portion to his love and determination that nothing should prevent

him gaining his ends. He had no chance of meeting her, except at the Theatre, where she was attended by men who kept him in awe. All the mornings she was engaged with Mr. Selwin; and Temple visited no private house that Lady Middleton was to be met at.

Williams was exactly in the same predicament; for nothing seemed likely to induce them to accept of any of his entertainments. In the meantime, Lady Mary Berkley, who frequented every public amusement, was become the favourite of a certain set, and followed and admired by that description of men whose opinion is considered as decisive in the world of fashion. Beloved as she thought herself by Temple, adored by several beaux, entertained by Mrs. Marchmont, and morning, noon, and night in company, she considered herself the happiest of all human beings; she had nothing to torment her but hearing from every
tongue

tongue the praises of those she long had detested.

It is not in direct question and answer we discover the lover; it is in the thousand little escapes the tongue unwittingly reveals from the heart—it is from the animated eye when the object is either seen or praised—the depression of countenance when the contrary—from impatience when deprived of the society—and the happiness, though against our will, evident when in presence of the beloved object—it is in seeing no fault, and by the look and gesture betraying a dislike to those who think not as favourably as the lover. All this was visible to Mrs. Marchmont; she told Temple the discovery, and warned him not to let Lady Mary see it. “But alas!” said she, “you will not be able to hide it; when you think yourself the least embarrassed, you are the more so; a jealous eye is quick.”

Temple was but too conscious he was heartily tired of Lady Mary ; her fondness sickened him, and he actually pretended illness, and staid away for five whole days. The governante had a promise of a large reward if she could put Mademoiselle M—— into his possession. She set her wits to work ; but there was no admission for the governante into the family in Piccadilly. What was to be done ? She had never failed her friends before ;—she was quick at invention, yet there was no redress ; for she had the character of all Mr. Beaumont's domestics from a friend of her's who served the house with meat, and she judged them all to be invulnerable. She recollected, however, that she had some years ago been acquainted with Lady Matilda Summers's woman, and it struck her that, could she once get a footing in that house without their knowing where she lived, she might be able, by a strict watch and great industry, to bring something about to the advantage of her employer.—

She

She told her thoughts to Temple; he was in raptures. What delusive visions of felicity did he not flatter himself with! He put a purse of guineas, by way of earnest, into the hands of the governante, and promised largely, which she had reason to know he would perform.

Temple had seen something in Mrs. Marchmont he did not like in this affair; he swore the governante to secrecy, gave her very plausible reasons, and in high spirits went to Golden-Square, where he had address enough to satisfy Lady Mary of his never-ceasing love, and determined to make no farther confidante of Mrs. Marchmont.

In a few days after this it was agreed that the governante should take an opportunity, when some of the female servants at the Duke of Somerton's were at the door, to pretend to sprain her ankle, in the hope of obtaining their pity, and being taken into their house; for if she could once make

good a visit, she was sure of all the rest.— Her look and manner certainly demanded civility from all strangers, and in due time her scheme succeeded. Her old acquaintance was speaking one day to a friend at the street door : she was perceived by the governante, who most inimitably came to the ground, and most opportunely sprained her ankle. She writhed, and frowned, and cried most bitterly. Lady Matilda's woman ran down the steps, and, with her friend, came to her assistance. She recognized her old acquaintance, and got some of the Duke's servants to take her into the hall — Her ankle was chafed, a glass of my Lord Duke's best wine brought to recruit her spirits, and she was most humanely asked to remain until the next day. She drank tea, and supped in the housekeeper's room ;— she laid herself out to be agreeable, and entertained them with much that she had heard, and more that she had imagined ;— in gratitude for which she learned all she wished to know— that there was to be a masquerade

masquerade at Somerton House, and a great deal of my Lord Marquis's love for Lady Middleton, which, to be sure, the housekeeper said, though she preferred Mr. Beaumont, every body was surprised at ;—for their young Lord was reckoned one of the handsomest young men in London.—That Mr. Beaumont was a very fine man, nobody could deny, and of a great family too ; but then he was not son to a Duke, nor never would be a Duke. For certain Lady Middleton was a match for the greatest man in England, and she must have the hardest heart of any woman in the world if she could see their young Lord suffer so much on her account, and not love him a little, which Mr. Beaumont never could be angry at, because he was so fond of the Marquis himself.

“ To be sure,” said Lady Matilda's woman, “ when the Marquis was cut in that frightful manner on the ice, Lady Middleton

suffered as much as if it had been Mr. Beaumont himself."

Mademoiselle M—— was next enquired about, but they knew no more of her than that she was daughter to a great Marquis in France; that she was a friend of Lady Middleton's; that she had been left a great fortune in Yorkshire; and that every body loved her, she was so sprightly and so generous. Thus did the servants of my Lord Duke of Somerton entertain the governante, who, giving the chamber-maid half-a-crown, was conveyed in a sedan-chair to Golden-Square, first giving every assurance that she would take the earliest opportunity of calling on them, and once more returning them those thanks so much their due.

She immediately retailed to Temple all she had heard, and laid down her scheme with such method, that he had every hope of success. Mrs. Marchmont was sadly distressed

distressed when she saw her friend limping into the room, and heard of her lamentable accident.

“ I have been very uneasy indeed about you,” said Mrs. Marchmont ; “ I have not slept all night. Why did you not send to let me know where you were ; I should have taken a surgeon with me, and every thing necessary for your leg ; you must lie on the couch, and send for Mr. Phillips.”

She went to the bell, and rung for a servant, that Mr. Phillips, the surgeon, should be immediately sent for to look at the governante's ankle. Mrs. Marchmont's tender regards no doubt filled the heart of her friend with the sincerest gratitude : she blessed herself, and returned thanks with uplifted hands and eyes.

“ Surely,” said she, “ Heaven has given me the kindest, the best benefactors in the
6 world,

world, to be thus uneasy at so slight an accident !”

“ A fiddle with your prayers and nonsense !” said Mrs. Marchmont ; “ I insist on your having advice instantly.”

This was exactly what the governante did not chuse ; for though she had, previous to her fall, rubbed her ankle with a certain liquid, which caused it to look extremely red, and this had raised the pity of half the domestics of my Lord Duke, she had, however, had it tightly bandaged, so that it should not be necessary to open it again during her stay ; for she wisely judged that if she had not so contrived, she could not remain, if the good-nature of the house-keeper or Lady Matilda’s woman had, out of pure kindness, insisted on her shewing her leg, and having it again chafed. There being no appearance of swelling or redness on the part so dreadfully hurt, would have been a want not easily supplied ;—she therefore first objected to have it so tightly bound, but was afterwards

afterwards convinced it was the best thing for it, and that those about her had knowledge sufficient in those cases to recommend it ;— but though all this passed off to her entire satisfaction, she nevertheless would by no means wish for a professional man passing his judgment on it. She therefore told Mrs. Marchmont that the accident had happened at the very door of Mr. Godfrey, in Southampton-Street, and that luckily he himself saw her fall, and had every thing necessary done, and gave her positive directions not to open it for three days, but to keep it constantly wet with this, taking out a bottle from her pocket, with a proper label, and Godfrey's name on it. This completely set Mrs. Marchmont at rest.

“ But why,” said she, “ did you not return ? ”

The governante replied that her aunt lived the next door to Mr. Godfrey's, and that she remained with her, the pain being so very violent.

The

The death of this faithful governante would have been the most dreadful misfortune that Mrs. Marchmont could have experienced next to that of her beloved son, the Earl of Belmore ; for though this trusty friend was in one secret, which was the illegitimacy of this darling child, she was quite at ease about that ; for her constant and uniform kind treatment, and great liberality, made it her interest to be silent. She besides induced her son to be also liberal in presents to her, in the expectation of her being attached to the boy ; but there was something in his nature, or that of the governante, so uncongenial, that each disliked the other, which was a circumstance that by some accident or other escaped the observation of the wily mother. Riches have a powerful effect on some minds ;—this woman was become too wealthy for her narrow soul ; she began to have some secret longings for comforts that she very lately found out she did not enjoy under the roof of the kindest benefactress, and she occupied

pieced her thoughts a good deal on arrangements for a future establishment, more suited to her present circumstances. There was, moreover, a certain confectioner in the vicinity of St. James's, that she had long had in her mind's eye; he was a Frenchman, who, like herself, began upon little, but, by good luck, care, and industry, had amassed some thousands. They were natives of the same town in France, had been acquainted many years, and he had managed and put out her money with such conduct as to gain her entire approbation. He was also a healthy, strong, good-looking man, about fifty-five. The governante was older; but having been a very pretty woman in her youth, she retained still a sufficient share of beauty to recommend herself strongly as a wife to the above confectioner, who was perfectly satisfied in point of her character; for he had many years before made her such offers, as plainly proved to him that though she, with much address, helped others to

go astray, she nevertheless was herself a woman of virtue.

Several late overtures from Monsieur Reynhault, for that was the confectioner's name—an offer of leaving off business, and living in any part of London the most approved—of setting up a chariot, which he could very well afford, for he had never been married, and had no child to provide for, with many other *et-ceteras*, much to the fancy of the governante, caused her to think seriously of accepting his proposals, and breaking with her dear friend, Mrs. Marchmont, the moment she had executed her plans on Mademoiselle M——, to ensure her five hundred pounds from the amorous Temple as her reward. But how to bring about the quitting her friend was the question: she dreaded the raillery of Mrs. Marchmont on her marriage with Monsieur Reynhault; she feared her not consenting to it, for she did not wish to quarrel with her; so that, considering the whole

whole of the business, the governante was certainly in an awkward situation ; for she had a presentiment she should leave Mrs. Marchmont with great difficulty. There was one thing that urged her, in a great measure, to it—Lady Mary Berkeley living in Golden-Square ; for, from the moment her Ladyship became a resident there, the governante had serious thoughts of quitting. She disliked Lady Mary, and was offended with Mrs. Marchmont for not consulting her upon receiving her. This, however, she took very good care to keep to herself ; but it was the primary cause for leaving Mrs. Marchmont, whom she had made up her mind never to forgive.

Monfieur Reynhault, when he found his mistress at all inclined to listen to his suit, became very pressing, and tried to remove every thing that was a bar to his felicity.—He laughed at her delicacy with respect to Mrs. Marchmont, whose friendship he thought might still be preserved ; of course it was necessary not to offend.

“ Tell

“ Tell her candidly, Madame,” said the Frenchman, “ that you wish to get into a house of your own, and to marry a man who can support you in it, and take care of you when you grow old. This is reason, and she must allow it.”

“ *Ma foi !*” said the governante ; “ reason is the very last thing in the world you could ever get Mrs. Marchmont to attend to.”

Just as they had arrived to this part of their conversation, they came to the shop-door of Monsieur Reynhault. He begged her, with the most gallant air, to walk in, and take some refreshment. A waiter of the finest confectionary was laid in a moment before her by one of the men, and Monsieur did himself the supreme honour of filling a glass of most excellent Madeira, which, as the day was cold, though beautifully fine, she drank ; but, like all the French, she was very moderate, the pastry being more grateful to her palate than the strongest

strongest and richest wines he could have treated her with.

While she was stuffing, and Monsieur highly entertained with her wit, for in truth, when she pleased, she could be very diverting, two gentlemen came into the shop, both young, and one of them uncommonly handsome.

“I am cursedly hungry, Reynhault,” said the handsome one; “let me get some of the best things you have, and a good bottle of Madeira; for upon my soul we dine so damned early at Oxford, I cannot hold out to these London hours, and I am to dine to-day, or rather to-night, at the old Duke of Devon’s, where are to be also the most beautiful women in the world.”

“I suppose,” said the other, who had only just joined him as they entered the shop, “it is Lady Middleton, Lady Sandford, and a French lady, whose name I could not learn, you speak of.”

“Upon

“ Upon my soul,” replied the other, “ I don’t know who they are, nor do I much care ; so fill me another glass, my dear boy ; the day is monstrous cold, and faith ! Reynhault, this wine of your’s is excellent. Lady Middleton and who ? ” continued he, carelessly ; “ they are some d——d made up old hags, I suppose ; for old women are now quite the rage. I like young women best,” making a very low bow to the governante, and paying her a handsome compliment, which she received, and returned according to the agreeable rules of every Frenchwoman.

Lady Middleton’s coach stopped just then opposite the shop of Monsieur Reynhault.

“ There is the very lady I was speaking of,” said the gentleman ; “ and now pray, Sir William, judge for yourself.”

“ Oh ho ! ” said the young Baronet, “ here is something worth looking at.”

Lady

Lady Middleton's coach had drawn up to take in Mr. Beaumont, who was walking with three gentlemen, who detained her in conversation, so that all in the shop had an opportunity of viewing her.—

The young men having finished, Sir William desired it might be put down to his account ; and standing at the door until the coach drove off, swore he had never seen a handsome woman before.

“ Pray who are these gentlemen ?” asked the governante.

“ They are,” said Monsieur, “ two very different characters : the oldest is a young man of good fortune, and what is even better, very good sense ; he is a Member of Parliament, and his country looks up to him as the protector of its rights, his family as its chief ornament, and his dependants as their friend ; his name is Bentley. The other is Sir William Wanflow, whose father has been dead about a year, and his mother also

many ; his fortune is very large, but not sufficiently so for him—he has been coming to my shop since he was nine years old ; since which time he has never been out of my debt.—He has paid me forty pounds at a time, and then begun a new score ; and thus he goes on with all with whom he deals. He has a valet besides that would ruin him, if he had not so great an inclination to it himself ;—an artful intriguing rascal, who, I fear, will hurt his character as well as his fortune.—Sir William is, as you have observed, a very handsome young man ; he is good-natured, but very weak, and I fear will be the dupe of many in this great town. I pity him,” continued Reynhault ; “ he has nobody to take care of him, and he is not able of himself ; he has not even a domestic possessed of the least worth ; and we shall hear very soon of his shooting himself.’

The governante began to laugh at her lover.—“ You think too seriously, Monsieur,” said she.

“ I

“ I fear not,” he replied ; “ he dines to-day at the Duke of Devon’s ; if he gets into that set, we may have some hopes of him ;—but he is intimate with a Mr. Temple, who will keep him from all good, and lead him into all evil.”

His female auditor took no notice of his censure on her friend, Mr. Temple ; he was not, nor did she intend he ever should be, acquainted with all her secrets. It was, however, agreed upon between them that Mrs. Marchmont should immediately see there was something brooding in the head of the governante preparatory to the disclosing of her intentions.

CHAP. V.

SOME days passed on without affording any opportunity of even hinting at the plan in agitation, when at last one morning Lady Mary went for the day with a party on horseback, and the governante was requested to attend her friend in her dressing-room.—Here Mrs. Marchmont opened a business of the greatest importance, which she requested to put under her prudent guidance and conduct ; but was coldly rejected, as being of too delicate and dangerous a nature for her to attempt.—Had I an hundred pens, as many hands, and the united energy of all languages combined in one, I could not give an adequate idea of the rage that
now

now assailed Mrs. Marchmont; she was for some time deprived of the power of utterance—she could hardly believe her senses.

“Do I hear aright?” at last she exclaimed. “Dare you dispute my will, my orders?” fury flashing from her eyes, and every nerve distended with passion.

The governante, with all the *sang froid* in the world, shrugged her shoulders, and said it was quite impossible. She knew Mrs. Marchmont could not bear opposition or controul, and that this conduct would enrage her more than ever. She also knew her violent passion must get vent, and therefore became a silent and unmoved spectator of such a scene of madness as beggared description, in which she was commanded out of her presence, and, in the height of her ungovernable fury, never to see her more.

The governante could not receive a more welcome mandate; and she instantly quitted

the house, leaving a message with Lady Mary's woman, that she would return in a week to collect all her property, till which time she took the liberty of holding the key of her apartment.

When passion gave place to reflection, Mrs. Marchmont rang her bell ; and as her maid was ill, Lady Mary's answered.

“ Be so good as to tell Madame to come to me,” said she.

The Abigail then gave the message she had just received. No oak in the sterile month of December was more sapless, more dried up than was the blood of Mrs. Marchmont. She sunk breathless on a couch. Her uncommon agitation was not observed by Lady Mary's woman, who, vexed at being obliged to answer her bell, delivered the message, and abruptly left the room. She was, besides, just at that moment listening to the softest tale from a very highly favoured

favoured lover ; and interruptions in those critical moments are hardly ever recovered.

Every drop of blood in Mrs. Marchmont's body might have congealed ; sense might have totally fled ; she might have laboured in a nervous fit ; have cried, laughed, stormed ; in short, she might have done any thing, every thing, and the most fatal accident have happened, without Mrs. Pennington, my Lady Mary's woman, ever once thinking it at all necessary to look in upon her to know if she could be of any use. The truth was, Mrs. Pennington did not much like Mrs. Marchmont ; and as she had her own Lady what we call a little under her thumb, there was an indifference in her every movement, which Lady Mary often wished to reprove ; but something always occurring to her mind on those occasions, she thought it better, on the whole, not to take notice of it. Mrs. Pennington therefore had pretty much her own way, and, with a great deal of coolness, permitted Mrs. Marchmont to

ring her bell three several times ere she put her foot on the first step of the stairs that led to that lady's dressing-room; and Lady Mary just coming in at the hall door as her woman, with careless ease, was crossing it, she stopped, of course, to make way for her Lady; and when she approached—

“Here,” said she, “my Lady, has been a fine piece of work to-day; the governante is gone off in a pet, and Mrs. Marchmont, I believe, not much pleased with her treatment of so excellent a friend.”

“Madame gone off!” screamed Lady Mary, turning as pale as death.

“Heyday, my Lady! what is the matter?” cried Mrs. Pennington.

“The matter,” said Lady Mary, a little recovering herself; “why she was the best thing in the house.”

“Then the best thing in the house is gone,” replied the Abigail.

“You

“ You seem, I think, to speak with a little too much freedom,” said Lady Mary. “ Get me my things to dress.”

“ I am sorry, my Lady, you do not like my manner : but I must take the liberty of telling your Ladyship I was not hired to wait on more than one ; and if I am to attend Mrs. Marchmont, I will be no longer your woman.”

“ Nonsense !” said Lady Mary ; “ get me my things to dress.”

“ It is very good sense,” was the reply ;— “ and I hope your Ladyship will not oblige me to repeat it.”

Lady Mary was all good humour and humility in a moment ; and, setting up a loud laugh, she nimbly tripped up to Mrs. Marchmont.

“ Upon my word,” said Mrs. Pennington, in soliloquy, “ I am laughed at too, am I. Take care, Lady Mary Berkley ! I may
F 5 possibly

possibly make you laugh at the wrong side of your mouth before it is long."

All the horrors of Mrs. Marchmont's mind were depicted in her countenance; she was sitting, after a violent fit of tears, with her head-dress in disorder, her eyes rolling heavily; her hands folded, when Lady Mary entered. She started; every feature, every look, every word spoke the inward workings of her soul; she was literally in a situation few could envy.

"Good Heavens!" said her friend, "what is the matter?"

"A sudden illness has come upon me," returned Mrs. Marchmont, "which has been increased by the loss of my old friend. You know, Lady Mary, how kindly I have treated her; you know how fond I am of her; pity me, for I am miserable."

"It is very unfortunate indeed," said Lady Mary; "what could have happened?"

"My

“My d——d passion,” she replied, “that I never can command! What is to be done?”

“Get her back by all means, if you can,” replied her Ladyship, “in which I will join you.”

“Alas! she is gone; we know not where to find her, and she will not be here this week.”

“Good God!” said Lady Mary, “is it possible we are undone!”

“Undone indeed,” said Mrs. Marchmont: “and so thoroughly sensible was she of this, that nothing could appease her.”—All her sins now rushed upon her in full force.—“This woman, whom I have offended, will betray, will expose me to the world, and I am lost past redemption.”

They were that night to go to the Opera by appointment: Lady Mary was to meet her dear Temple there, and she trusted in his violent love to replace, with a person equally clever, the governante, to ensure those interviews he seemed to her to prize so

much: but Temple was too violently attached to the innocent Mademoiselle M—— to wish to make the accommodation. They met, however, that night at the Opera, but poor Mrs. Marchmont had neither pleasure nor spirits for any thing; she and Lady Mary had drank a glass of Champagne just on their getting into the carriage, in hopes of giving them a little false spirits for the night.

Temple's whole thoughts were, how he could get Lady Mary off his hands, for she was become d——d tiresome; and from his knowledge of Sir William Wanslow, he was determined to try to get her married to him. He had gained a very great ascendancy over this weak young man, insomuch that he could wind him round his finger. They dined that day together, and drank rather freely, but not so much as to intoxicate.— Temple gave as a toast Lady Mary Berkley, one of the finest women in England, and talked in raptures of her.

“ You

“ You seem in love with her,” said the Baronet.

“ Mad in love,” replied Temple ; “ but there is no touching her heart ; it is made of such impenetrable stuff. I have been assured she is quite insensible to the tender passion.

“ Have you done your best ?” asked Sir William.

“ Yes, upon my soul, my very best,” rejoined Temple, laughing.

“ Then, damme,” said Wanflow, “ her heart must be of impenetrable stuff indeed ; for you are a confounded handsome fellow, Temple, and ought to be a favourite with the ladies.”

“ Why, in truth,” replied Temple, “ I have not been very unsuccessful ; Lady Mary is the only woman whom I ever thought worth the trouble, that I have not won ; but there, though I have been unremitting, I have failed, and I know several fine fellows who have been as unfortunate as myself.”

This

This was just the bait to hold out to such a headstrong giddy boy : it stimulated his ambition ; and before he saw this chaste goddess, he thought he would be renowned in history, could he become the favourite of a woman who scorned so many handsome fellows. All that Temple told him he took for gospel, and entreated for an introduction.

Temple said he was engaged to meet Mrs. Marchmont, mother to the Earl of Belmore, and Lady Mary, at the Opera, and would introduce him there. They then went to dress, Sir William elated with the desire of becoming the envy of half the men about town, and Temple at the hopes of getting off a woman who was hateful to him.

Sir William had told Temple that Lady Middleton and her two fair friends were the most heavenly women he had ever seen ; but they were not gay enough for him, and that he found he could not talk freely to them.— Besides, he did not think them at all agree-
5 able ;

able; that the French lady was lively, but too diminutive for him; he liked large beauties.

“Ho ho!” said Temple to himself, “Lady Mary Berkley will just do for you.”

Mrs. Marchmont had a box at the Opera, where Temple took the unfortunate Baronet. Lady Mary never looked better; and Sir William, who was really very handsome, was received by both ladies with infinite civility. We have before taken notice of Lady Mary being quite the rage with a certain set, which was the very set in the highest esteem of Sir William.

Temple contrived that this night they should all bustle about her, that she should not seem a too easy prey. He gave Mrs. Marchmont a hint of his intentions, and desired she would ask him, with all the rest of the men, to supper. Poor Sir William could hardly get near her. Temple, however,

ever, conducted it so, that he took care of her to the carriage ; and to give him an opportunity of pressing her naked hand, which, with her arms, were remarkably beautiful, as this, he knew, would inflame the boy, and bring things to a quicker conclusion, he contrived she should lose her gloves.

All that was gay, witty, and entertaining, was to be found at Mrs. Marchmont's *petit soupees*. This was no time to damp Temple's spirits by an account of the governante. All was harmony in his breast. Lady Mary forgot her sorrow, and looked with pleasure on the handsome boy, who, she saw, was fairly captivated ; and at a very late hour the company broke up, highly pleased with each other.

Sir William was of the clubs ; he drove a phaeton and six greys ; his coach was a piece of Hatcher's best workmanship ; he intended getting also on the turf ; and who was so happy as Sir William Wanslow ? But
from

from the moment he touched the hand of Lady Mary, all other things gave place to his violent passion for her.

When Temple understood that the governante had evacuated her apartments in Golden Square, and was no more to reside with her friend, no pen can speak in terms at all adequate to his feelings.

“ By Heavens !” said he, “ we are all blown ; Frederic will soon lose his Earldom, and his twenty-five thousand pounds per annum. She will prove him my son, and you, my dear Marchmont, no woman of character will visit. He stamped, he raged, he stormed, he tore every thing that came in his way, he upbraided his wretched confidante with her folly.

“ You ought to have licked the dust off that woman’s shoes,” said he, “ who, has you so much in her power, instead of shewing her the slightest disrespect ; but you have
lately

lately lost all your foresight, all your wonted quickness and propriety. Was there ever any thing like it? Madame gone, and to our enemies!—She does not love that blubbering boy; I have long seen it, and she will never rest till she finds out some other heir for the title and wealth of that bastard.”

“Nay,” said Mrs. Marchmont, “you perhaps may be mistaken.”

“Don’t talk to me,” said he; “you have brought ruin on yourself, on me, on that puppy! I shall be ashamed to shew my face; you yourself will be obliged to fly, and I shall live an exile in some foreign country.” He took up his hat.—“Now,” said he, “hear what I have to say;—have your money and valuables ready at a moment’s warning; provide what will give you the comforts you have been used to; I give you the advice I shall follow myself.”

He flew out of the room, rushed out of the house, and hastened to his own, where,
shutting

shutting himself up, he gave a free loose to his distracted imagination. When come a little to himself, he began to reflect that his schemes on Sir William were not to be neglected. He had accompanied him, prior to this period, to a few gambling houses, and won several hundreds. He now became tenacious of spending a guinea ; he wished to amass all he could against a rainy day, which he prognosticated was not far distant, and therefore set himself seriously to work, to make as much as possible of Sir William's ready money change masters as might be consistent with safety to his character and himself. And while Mrs. Marchmont sat brooding over her own corrosive retrospects, Temple was winning hundreds from the young raw Baronet, who, every time he saw Lady Mary, drank large draughts of love.

The week had expired, and Madame appeared in Golden Square ; nothing was left undone to reconcile her, but without effect. She said she had been faithful to Mrs. Marchmont

mont in an uncommon degree; that she had served her with zeal and integrity; that the plot she was now upon was more than she would venture; that the character of Lady Middleton was unequalled; her rank so exalted, her domestics so invulnerable, that nothing could induce her to risk her peace by attempting what was impossible, or to injure so great and beneficent a personage, who she had never heard had any thing to do with Mrs. Marchmont.

The largest rewards were offered to the governante if she would remain: the most endearing expressions of affection and attachment were used by Mrs. Marchmont, but to no purpose; she was unmoved to all, and quitted Golden Square for ever.

Temple found he had not so much to dread; he flattered, and kept in with the governante, who promised all her aid to accomplish his designs on Mademoiselle M——, whom he had the happiness of seeing

seeing both at the Opera, and other public places, but without finding a possibility of speaking to her. The masquerade at Somerton House was talked of now more than any other subject. Sir William, as a visiter at the Duke of Devon's, was asked, and shewed his ticket to Temple, who lamented his not knowing any of the family, and told Sir William he would give an hundred pieces to be in possession of that ticket.

Sir William said, if it could be of any use to him, it was most heartily at his service, for that he was absolutely engaged to Mrs. Marchmont that night, and that he would not give up Lady Mary's company for all the stupid entertainments in the world.—“But as the name of each person that is asked, is written in a particular hand on the ticket, what will you do when they unmask?” said he.

“Why, my dear fellow, say that, as you were better engaged, I took your place, that's all.”

“Oh!

“Oh ! as to that matter,” said Wanflow, “you must manage it according to your own feelings ; but I am monstrous glad I have it to give you.”

The governante had rewarded the long attachment of her ancient lover ; and at the French Ambassador’s Chapel she gave up her liberty, and received the name of Reynhault. Wives, it is commonly reported, can keep no secrets from their husbands ;—and during the honey-moon, she reposed those in the breast of her loving spouse, that both Mrs. Marchmont and Mr. Temple wished should never have escaped her own.

Reynhault was a sensible man ; and though he had made a large fortune, he was an honest one : he married Madame for an agreeable companion, who had money enough to bear her own expences, and who would shorten the winter of life by social converse. He was rather shocked at the things she told him, but he did not let it appear, and
resolved

resolved to have justice done to every individual that his wife had assisted to deceive. He joined her, however, in nothing, but begged she would not take any decisive step against Mademoiselle M—— without acquainting him with it. She assured him she would not.

“She is our countrywoman, my dear,” said Reynhault:—“amongst the English then we should not destroy our own.”

Madame seemed that moment to receive a new idea.

“True, my dear,” she replied; “I only thought of the reward I was to get.”

“Then think of it no more,” said the good man; “I have orders from Mr. Beaumont’s *maitre d’hotel* to take in my bill, and I shall find out from him who Mademoiselle M—— is.”

The

The near approach of Mr. Henry's departure had a very sensible effect on all Mr. Beaumont's house ; but there was one who nourished a secret passion for him, which robbed her of all repose : sleep had for many weeks fled a pillow that had been too long disturbed by the unavailing tears of sorrow. Mrs. Markham spoke of the alteration of her looks to Lady Middleton, who had long feared for her young friend ; she had noticed the change in Mademoiselle M——, and lamented her fate.

The charming Henry possessed those attractive graces of nature which strike at first sight—which need neither friends nor recommendation to pre-engage the favourable opinion of every one. He had that gentleness of soul that most attracts ; and sympathy informed the artless maid that he had a heart susceptible of every tender passion. The young soldier stifled a flame that would have blazed, did he consult only his own good ;—but a failure of duty in others was no exemption

exemption to him. An orphan, supported by the beneficence of his exalted friends, should not basely betray the confidence placed in him by them, and steal the affections of a woman of rank and fortune. He was touched with the most bitter remorse for having produced one wish that could stain his honour.— His fondness was ardent, but it was chaste. He loved Mademoiselle M——, but it was involuntary : he never had talked to her of his love, nor tried by any art to gain her affections ; but all those little services, which are sure to conciliate the good opinion, and increase the growing liking in the daily intercourse of the family, were not to be avoided ; and this, alas ! was enough.

“ Ah, dear Lady Middleton !” he would often cry to himself, “ despise me not :— much I own have I offended, yet what have I to plead ? I have erred, but not intentionally. Why am I not in India, that that love which prudence and honour oblige me to conceal, should still remain unknown ?—

Yet if I could find my parents, if no shame attends my birth, if it is honourable, then perhaps the worth of—Mr. Beaumont and Lady Middleton might think me not presumptuous. Oh then with what bliss would I solicit a place in the pure heart of that angelic maid where every feminine virtue dwells!—But I rave, and the enchanting image deludes my eager mind: I am unknown, and therefore unfit for a place in her gentle bosom.—Ah! there is room for meditation even to madness.”

Thus did the amiable Henry rave. He had ever preserved a certain distance to Mademoiselle M——, and he now increased it. This made her feel doubly unhappy: she thought, in the gay circles of London, he had given away his heart, and she in secret pined at this sad thought.—The masquerade was near; she had wished for it; but that wish was now no more.—Misfortune seemed to threaten her, and hope refused to clear away the cloud. When
Henry

Henry once left England, she never expected to see him again ; all therefore was gloomy, all was sad.

The dominos, which all Lady Middleton's party, both men and women, fixed on for their dresses, came home : they, with the cocked hats and feathers, masks, &c. were all as handsome as possible. The gentlemen were not as yet arisen from table, and Mrs. Markham proposed that the ladies should dress themselves to surprise them on their entering the drawing-room. This was productive of great mirth, in the midst of which there was a message to Lord Lovesdale that the Duke his father had been taken suddenly ill, and his presence immediately required. This threw not only the Marquis, but also the whole company into confusion.

Mr. Beaumont, who had just put on his masquerade dress, instantly took it off, and went with the Marquis to Somerton House, where they found every thing in the greatest
G 2 confusion.

confusion. All the first physicians were assembled round the Duke's bed, and the Duchess and Lady Matilda were real pictures of despair. He had had a most dangerous fit, and life hung suspended on so fine-drawn a thread, that it was expected to break every moment. The amiable Lovesdale stood with folded hands at the foot of the bed, grief and despair strongly marked in his expressive countenance. He uttered not a word. Genuine sorrow is not allied to eloquence ; yet his silence was more expressive, for every feature shewed the feelings of his heart. All that night the issue was doubtful. Mr. Beaumont never left the Marquis ; the physicians gave up all hopes about eight o'clock in the morning, and pronounced him dying, and were quitting the house. All around was still ; no footsteps were heard, as who should say, " We softly tread, lest noise should reach the dying ear."

Mr. Beaumont was fond of the study of physic ; he wanted nothing but practice to
make

make him a most able physician. He followed the gentlemen; and modestly telling them that since they had given up their patient, he entreated a method, which he had known in similar cases have the happiest effect, might be tried.

The unaffected manner of sound sense and real knowledge in the subject treated of, always ensures that notice we aim at.—The medical gentlemen all agreed his arguments were founded on reason, and instantly repaired to the sick room, when the different operations, under the immediate directions of Mr. Beaumont, were performed, and, with unceasing labour, every part of the body and limbs rubbed with a preparation of herbs; and in six hours from the beginning of those remedies there were signs of life.

Joy now burst from every heart; the Marquis fell on the bosom of Mr. Beaumont, and wept like a child. Every hour

the patient shewed new signs of returning strength ; now it was possible to administer inward remedies ; the jaws no longer adhered together ; the eyes opened, and respiration, about eleven o'clock at night, became free.

Mr. Beaumont remained the whole of the second night in the Duke's room ; and it was not before the third morning he was prevailed on to return home. The Duke recovered slowly, but with every prospect of his entirely throwing off the disorder, and being once more in a state of perfect convalescence.

CHAP. VI.

HAPPINESS was again restored at Somerton House, and Mr. Beaumont strongly recommending Bath waters, the Duke and Duchefs, with Mr. and Mrs. Selby, set off for that place as soon as the Duke was able to travel. They insisted that both Lord Lovesdale and his sister should remain with their dear Beaumont and Lady Middleton. However, both the Marquis and Mr. Beaumont followed them there, and remained with them until they saw the effect of the waters; and finding they answered all the purposes intended, Mr. Beaumont returned alone. The Marquis would not leave his beloved father; he

supported him to the pump-room and from it, twice a day, never quitting him ;— and he had the happiness to find he recovered rapidly.

Meantime the masquerade at Somerton House was thought of no more, and Mr. Temple's ticket, of course, of no use ; Madame governante's schemes were all frustrated, and Temple himself the most unhappy man in the world. His only pursuit was now the ruin of Sir William Wanflow, and that was maturing beyond his most sanguine expectations. He had already won seven thousand pounds from him, and Sir William had made his proposals of marriage to Lady Mary. Mrs. Marchmont had pointed out the advantages that would arise from such a connection ; and the youth, beauty, riches, and folly of the Baronet were so alluring, that she accepted him, and proper preparations were making for the wedding.

Temple

Temple took care to keep a strict watch on Sir William. Mrs. Marchmont made her house so agreeable to him, that he never wished to be in any other; and Temple seemed so melancholy at the loss of Lady Mary, though, as he assured Sir William, he knew she never could be brought to think of him, yet he could not help feeling her loss. Two other young men, who had spent a little too freely, liked her person as well as her twenty thousand pounds; and these were pretty smart on Sir William, who, not wanting spirit, was ready enough to fight a duel or two for his charming mistress, which they, becoming sensible of, changed their conduct, and flattered his vanity by appearing melancholy and chagrined at their loss.

Lady Mary was so proud of the conquest she had made, that Temple was desired to shew the propriety of Sir William waiting on Lord Seal and the Duke of Devon, and asking their consent; for Lady Mary, fully
G 5 sensible,

sensible, and well knowing she did not merit the good fortune that was about to attend her, very properly judged this was a likely means of procuring an addition of fortune, and the countenance and protection of her family, should she ever stand in need of it. It is easy to conceive the happiness this gave all those good people. Lord and Lady Sandford were delighted at her quitting the house of Mrs. Marchmont; and Sir William, gratified at the reception he had met, thought himself the happiest man in the world. The Duke of Devon wished the marriage to be celebrated at his house; but Lady Mary thought it more prudent it should be at Mrs. Marchmont's, and excused herself, saying, she thought it would be treating Mrs. Marchmont ill, but, on her going to her own house, she should be glad to meet them.

Sir William Wanflow had seven thousand pounds per annum, and ten thousand pounds ready money on his coming of age; but as he

he spent more of those years at home which other boys do at school, he went to College at a late period, and did not leave Oxford till after he had attained the age of twenty-two. He had contracted there a greater knowledge of, and love for wine, than for any of the sciences or languages. He was a most critical connoisseur in every vintage, and he could tell the exact flavour of that juice that was pressed only from the sunny side of the grape. Every eatable and drinkable at Mrs. Marchmont's table were excellent; and, through Temple's interest, Sir William's palate was narrowly attended to; he fared no where so deliciously, no where drank such wines; he very seldom quitted the house at night till drunk; and though it is a propensity which most women dislike in a lover, Lady Mary had her own reasons for wishing him to continue it some time longer.

Wanflow's valet did not very much relish all this; but he found his influence had

lately abated of its force on the Baronet ;— he was a fellow of great gallantry and surprising penetration, and capable of the worst actions. He turned every thing to his own account, and soon made himself master of the character of Lady Mary. He had been an intimate friend of Mr. Winkfield, of famous memory, and knew a good deal about her Ladyship, with whom Winkfield was actually in love.

It seems as if these friends acted in concert, for the valet became very sensible of the charms of Lady Mary : he was a very well-made, athletic man, with a clear, sensible, handsome countenance, and a most insinuating address ; and Lady Mary pleased herself with considering, that in a few days she would possess the handsomest husband and valet that any lady of fashion in the circle of her acquaintance could boast.

A grand dinner was given, and a select party of friends on the wedding-day, assembled at

Golden Square. It was spent not as wedding-days sometimes are. The company were in high spirits—music, mirth, and *double en tendre*; the joke, we would not for the world say the joke profane, went round.—Sir William's glass was often filled, and he arose from the dinner table in high spirits.—Not only the young bridegroom, but all the party were exhilarated; and when Temple and his four companions left him, care was taken that he should be so primed with Madeira, as to recollect, by the morning, very little of the occurrences of the evening.

Lady Mary Berkley, now Lady Mary Wanflow, had arrived to the summit of happiness; and while her passion lasted for her husband, which was not long, all went on agreeably. There was nothing of expence she was not gratified in.—Lord Seal sent her, by her sister, some very fine jewels, but he gave her no money. Sir William also presented her with many; he thought he could not make her fine enough, that

that all women should envy his wife, as he was sure all men did him the possession of so much beauty and virtue.

They repaired to their own house, where the grand gaias, and enormous expence, convinced the world it could not last.

Lady Middleton, who was fond of the Opera, seldom missed one; and many, very many, followed her there. Indeed, wherever she was known to be, that place of public amusement was sure to be always crowded; and Lady Matilda Summers being fond of company, induced Lady Middleton to lead a much more dissipated life than the otherwise would have chosen.— She also wished to draw off the mind of Mademoiselle M——— from the object that dwelt too much upon it, or at least to vary the scene as much as possible, and thereby prevent that lassitude ever attendant on an unfortunate attachment.

Mademoiselle

Mademoiselle M——— had not the most distant idea that her secret was known.— She often wished to remain with Mr. and Mrs. Selwin instead of attending Lady Middleton, but from the disposition of this charming girl, it was thought better not to indulge her; but her unpractised heart, unable to oppose, suffered itself to be wholly possessed by the passion, and she found love was always present in public as well as private.

Lady Middleton, who saw through it all, left nothing undone to dissipate her melancholy. The Duchess of G——'s cards were out for a ball; nobody gave greater, and nobody had better reasons for doing so than her Grace. Two or three of Lady Middleton's constant male attendants were in the same situation as the Marquis of Lovesdale, pining under a violent and hopeless passion. A certain great Duke, who at this time was much in England, paid her open court.— His character is too well known to need any description;

description ; but he was so troublesome, and so disagreeable to her, that she had always as many men near her as she could, to prevent those assiduities that both distressed and disgusted her. By this means she was sometimes so successful as to keep him off.—The night of the Duchess of G——’s ball, however, he was particularly troublesome.

Lord Lovesdale, who had that evening returned from Bath, not being able to see Lady Middleton at home, from her being dressing, on his arrival at their house in Piccadilly, first saw her at the ball ; and knowing how much she was always annoyed by the above-mentioned Duke, he immediately joined her : and a lady, who sat next to her, rising to dance, Lord Lovesdale at once took her place. She had many enquiries to make for her Bath friends, and the Duke moved off very much disconcerted. The first person he addressed was Lady Mary Wanslow, who had been a silent observer of all this. The warmth with which
Lady

Lady Middleton had addressed Lord Lovelsdale, induced the Duke to think there was some relative connection between them ; he wished to be informed by Lady Mary, who laughed significantly, and said,—

“ Is it possible you should be ignorant of what all the world knows—the violent attachment of the charming young Marquis for Lady Middleton ? ”

“ And pray,” asked the Duke, “ is it returned ? ”

“ I really think you have pretty good reason to suppose it is,” replied Lady Mary ; and the Duke thought he was very dull for asking the question.

The Duke was just the very sort of man Lady Mary Wanslow wished to have in her train, and that she could not accomplish this had given her some pain ; now that she found Lady Middleton was his present favourite, she burned with an additional degree of hatred and envy.

“ How

“How this cursed woman crosses me in every wish of my heart!” said she.

Mr. Williams next joined her.—“What a divine woman,” he observed, “is Lady Sandford!”

“I always thought you the dullest creature in existence, Williams,” said she;—“and I never before had a stronger proof of it; first by liking any thing so tediously insipid as her Ladyship, and next, by troubling me with your musty thoughts of her.”

“What is the matter with the charming Lady Mary Wanflow?” said he.

“Oh! for Heaven’s sake, leave me,” said she, “if you do not wish to see me expire with the spleen!”

Lady Sandford, with her partner, and Lady Ann Berkley with her’s coming that way, made it quite unnecessary Lady Mary should repeat her command, from whom he directly turned on his heel, and left her, to join those who were much more to his mind. His
sister

sister had entered into conversation that night for the first time with Lady Middleton: her powerful understanding, wit, and vivacity quite charmed her Ladyship, and she determined to cultivate her acquaintance, and accept of the first invitation to Mr. Williams's house. This lady and gentleman were both highly pleased, and cards were sent out the next day for a ball, which he determined should not be exceeded in splendour or expence.

Sir William and Lady Mary Wanslow were every where. The former, who thought himself every thing desirable in the world's eye, was so fond of Lady Mary, that in many respects he seemed to be her very counterpart; he had adopted her thoughts, and caught her phrases, of which she had numbers peculiar to herself.

Temple, though he did not think his young friend by any means improved by the imitation,

imitation, told him, in terms of congratulation, that if similitude of character gives happiness in the marriage state, he had a prospect of the most perfect felicity. Sir William was highly pleased with the compliment.

“ I think, Temple,” said he, “ and I believe half the men about town think so too, that Lady Mary Wanflow is a prodigious fine woman.”

“ One of the finest women in England,” replied his friend.

“ Do you really think so ?”

“ I do, upon my soul !” again repeated Temple, “ and she is vastly improved since her marriage ; for your taste in dress, you know, Wanflow, is universally allowed to be genuine ; and, from the evident alteration in her’s lately, the whole town is convinced you order every article of her wardrobe.”

“ Are you serious ?”

“ Never

“Never more so in my life, by God!” continued he; “and you would yourself allow it; but I know you are modest.”

“Why, certainly—to be sure—I——”

“Oh yes, yes,” said Temple, who could hardly keep his countenance, “I understand what you would say.”—Though, *entre nous*, we are not very certain Sir William himself knew, for Lady Mary was very absolute, and piqued herself much on the elegance of her own taste in dress.

“If I had married her,” said Temple, “I should have soon got a little out at elbows; I should have been unreluctantly profuse in setting off her uncommon charms; but then, Wanslow, your fortune is much larger than mine, and the world expects to be surprised by a young man of your wealth and rank. You are now just the very first thing; the gaze of the town is upon you.”

“Why yes,” said Sir William, “I believe you are right.”

“You

“ You may be certain of it,” said Temple.

“ And it shall not be disappointed.”

“ I am convinced of that,” replied Temple.

We boldly assert as a certain truth, because there is not a question that it is a point the least dubious, that Sir William Wanflow, at this moment, was the happiest man in the world, *in his own opinion*.—From this time he launched out in the most unheard-of expence; he vied with the most extravagant; and as Lady Mary had her settlement much to her mind, she joined in it with as much delight as if it was always to last.

In this profusion of expence, Lady Mary thought it absolutely necessary to keep Sir William's valet her friend. On her marriage she made him so large a present, that the valet was a little surpris'd at it. She very prudently also satisfied Mrs. Pennington,

ton, her woman, and made her over to a lady who was going to Lisbon. A new Abigail was much more convenient for many obvious reasons ; and the valet, to do the family he lived with honour, was always most elegantly dressed ; and whenever he handed any thing to his Lady, he took very great care to touch her hand. It must not be omitted that the valet's hands were the softest and whitest, and set off by the most beautiful nails in the world.

Sir William was not a little proud of this handsome domestic : and, to add still more to Lady Mary's appearance, he was appointed to wait entirely on her. The assiduity, the adroitness, the wonderful cleverness of the valet, in his new employment, were not to be equalled ; for he had actually fallen in love with his Lady, and let no opportunity slip of making himself agreeable to her. As she was conscious of this, and equally conscious that he had inspired her with similar sentiments, she appeared to Sir William

William to dislike him extremely, and regretted her own man, who was a sober, proper, modest man, so that Sir William endeavoured to reconcile her as much as possible to him. He interrogated the valet, who said he really never had served a lady so hard to be pleased; he did his utmost, and was sorry to find it was not possible to give satisfaction; he entreated to be replaced in his former situation about his master, or parted with. Opposition, he well knew, was the very thing to ensure his own plans; and Sir William said he would do neither the one nor the other; he must be Lady Mary's own man; and that, as to leaving him, he should not, by God!

The valet seemed much discontented;—and Lady Mary was requested, by her lord and master, to shew more lenity to so faithful a domestic, which to please Sir William she promised.

Temple

Temple saw every thing going on with the rapidity he wished towards the total ruin of this young man; he had won very considerable sums of money from him, and saw him lose others of as great magnitude.

In this situation were things when the night arrived for the grand gala at Williams's, where Temple buoyed himself up with the hopes of meeting Mademoiselle M——; but, alas! this long expected night was as little productive of good to Mr. Temple, in forwarding his designs on Mademoiselle M—— as any of the foregoing; for she was always too well guarded to admit of any assiduities from a man she disliked too much to permit to talk to her. His faith in Madame Reynhault, however, was such, as to induce him to sound her again. He knew nothing of her husband, though Monsieur knew a great deal about him: he therefore went two or three times to the shop, and one day he asked if Reynhault was at home. He was answered, "No."

He then asked if Madame was, for that she would do as well. He was shewn into the parlour, where he found Madame Reynhault at work. The moment she saw Temple, she said she expected her husband every moment, and begged he would not remain. One of the men coming in from the shop, Temple, ever ready, hoped that the things would be sent as ordered, and that the directions he had just given would be observed critically.

“ Monsieur Reynhault will be particularly minute,” returned the Frenchman ;—
“ but you have not left the direction where they are to be sent.” She had observed a bit of paper in his hand.—“ Oh here it is,” said he.—Madame made one of her most distant curtsies to Mr. Temple, who immediately quitted the house : the paper had been previously prepared to give, should there be any impediment to talking to her. She met Temple
the

the next day in the old place. She told him the impossibility of her taking any part towards the seduction of the lady in question, for that her husband had been under the greatest obligations to the Marquis of M——, which she pretended to Temple she had discovered by accident, and that she would forfeit the good opinion of him for ever if she farther undertook it. She therefore brought him all the money he had given her on this occasion ; but Temple thought it much more for his interest not to accept it. He went from this interview to Mrs. Marchmont in a very ill humour ; he saw the total disaffection of Madame, and he descended to real abuse. Her folly was inconceivable in quarrelling with a woman who had so much in her power.

“ That d——d Lady Mary,” said he, “ was the ultimate cause of Madame Reynhault leaving this house.”

“ Lady Mary !” anxiously replied Mrs. Marchmont ; “ why, what was it to her

whom I pleased to bring into my house ;—
I was as fond of Madame———”

“ Oh d——n your fondness,” interrupted he ; “ you ought, I think, to have studied mankind to more purpose than to think a little foolish fondness will do away injuries. But this I tell you, you have a powerful enemy not only in Madame, but also in her husband ; and I am very much mistaken if there is not something hatching against us that will make us look a little sharp : and if there is, you may thank your own cursed passion ;” for Temple was now getting Mrs. Marchmont very much under his thumb.

While his love continued unabated, he treated her with the greatest kindness and respect ; that dissolved, he used her like a bear, which, for some reason or other, she was obliged to suffer patiently. He left her with a mind ill at ease with itself, and strolled to Portman Square, where Sir William Wanslow had a superb house : the street-door was open, the porter was off his post,

post, and no servant to be seen. He softly tripped up stairs ; and opening the door as quietly as possible, to surprise by his sudden appearance, the first object he saw was the valet leaping from the sofa where Lady Mary was reclining. Temple, always master of himself, took no notice of the valet, and giving him his hat and cane in the most natural manner in the world, told him he should not want them until nine o'clock, as he came to stay dinner.

As soon as they were alone, he took the place of the valet on the sofa, and read her a soft lecture on her passion for Monsieur Chignon ; she laughed at the idea, and said she had dropped her scissars, and Chignon was taking them up.

“ Take care,” said he ; “ you knew, before you told this likely tale, I should give it no credit ; therefore, prithee, don't be at the trouble of invention on this occasion : but you pay both Sir William and myself a

bad compliment in taking this sorry fellow to your affections."

Sir William coming in opportunely, she was saved from any more lectures from her old lover. In the evening her hair was dressed by Monsieur Chignon, and at ten o'clock she got into her *vis-a-vis*, and was drove to Mrs. Marchmont's, where was to be a very grand rout. Temple took Sir William to the club the latter was so partial to, and about two o'clock they arrived to sup in Golden Square. Sir William looked rather gloomy; and until he refreshed himself with two pints of Madeira, nothing was ever so dull as the Baronet.—It was a matter of very little consequence to Lady Mary; she made no enquiries into the cause of his uneasiness, and entertained him, as they drove home, with the plan of a gala, for which the next day she should send out cards.

"Then," said he, "for Heaven's sake never imitate Mrs. Marchmont, for this has
been

been a very heavy thing to-night ! My spirits are quite done up."

" They seemed to be quite done up before your arrival."

" Oh no, damme !" said he ; " the very look of the rooms throws me into the horrors, and then Mrs. Marchmont so tires me."

" You are grown quite fastidious, my love," said she.

The carriage stopped, and her Ladyship was revived by a tender pressure from the soft hand of Monsieur Chignon, and freed from the worst of all possible things, a conjugal *tête-à-tête* ; and she went to bed without bestowing a thought on the cause of uneasiness but too visible in the look and manner of Sir William.

A sensible wife would have acted otherwise ; a tender one would have soothed him ; a prudent one would have sought to know the cause, the source of his pain, if it

was only to prevent mischief by her sage counsel : but Lady Mary was not one of those—so she went to sleep, and dreamt of Monsieur Chignon and the Duc D'O——.

CHAP. VII.

THE perfect recovery of the Duke of Somerton induced Lord Lovesdale to acquaint him of his determination to go to India with Mr. Henry. He had, for some time before he left Bath, said how much he should like it. What we call preparatory conversations are often of use ; it leads the mind, without actually speaking, on the very subject we wish to recommend. In this instance it had the best possible effect ; for on the Marquis's returning to Bath,
and

and speaking out, he found his father not so much surpris'd as he expected. The family had long seen the state of misery their amiable son was reduced to, and bitterly lamented that they themselves should have been the primary causes of his unhappiness;—they saw he was lost to them, to himself, and to the world; they did not oppose what they thought a wild and hopeless project—they found it had taken forcible hold of his imagination; they reflected that reason, in his situation, was never attended to; they wished any other arrangement would prove as effectual; they said they feared they should never see him more, but that, if he thought it would bring that ease to his mind he sought, and of which he stood so much in need, they would submit.

There was all that patient pity, that deep regret, which might be expected from their great affection. The conflict was indeed severe; and in the contention between Nature and Justice, the latter might seem to

come off victorious, and she did so, for they consented ; but the powerful workings of the former caused the victory without much to boast : and the Marquis left them still more wretched than ever. He changed colour, and sighed, as if to throw off the expected pressure from his heart ; but it would not do. His feeling soul, struck with the kindness of his revered and beloved family, sunk into the deepest sadness.

He left Bath more dead than alive ; and on his return to London, busied himself in preparations. He had purchased the commission he was in treaty for, and in a week they were to embark.

Every heart in the house of Mr. Beaumont was depressed. Lady Middleton suffered exceedingly ; she knew herself to be the cause of this wonderful determination of the Marquis. Lady Matilda was at Bath, and Lord Lovelace had not the satisfaction of seeing her married :—Lord Melville's conduct

duct was still enveloped in mystery, so that the Marquis had not one pleasing retrospection. His faithful servant Stanley would attend him. This good man said he had enjoyed ease and luxury with his dear Lord, and that he would share all the dangers and difficulties of war with him ; happy if, by the tenderest and most dutiful care, he should be able once more to see him in England, in the bosom of his family :—he would then be repaid for any hardships he should endure ; that thought would cheer him when burning under a meridian sun, or lying beneath the unwholesome dews of those climates ;—“ and if Heaven,” said he, “ so far befriends me as to escape the dreadful disorders incident to Europeans, my dear Lord shall find a faithful friend and servant to watch over and shield him from those dangers quick-eyed affection may prevent.”

When Stanley ended, Lord Lovesdale turned to hide the effect this had upon him.

“Why,” said he, “do I find every one so very worthy?”

He was almost sorry this good man's attachment to him should lead him into a life so unfitting for him. He argued, besought he would not think of attending him to India, but stay with the Duke till his return; all was in vain. Stanley was not to be dissuaded from his resolution; the Marquis therefore would not hurt the peace and feelings of a generous, though humble mind by insisting on what he knew would be more to his advantage; he therefore let him arrange the matter according to his refined feelings.

“Come with me then,” said he, “and thy honest heart shall meet its due reward.”

“I thought love had been a joyous thing,” quoth my uncle Toby.—“’Tis the most serious thing, an’t please your Honour (sometimes), that is in the world.”

Serious

Serious indeed did the amiable Marquis, Mr. Henry, and Mademoiselle M—— find it. It was grievous to behold the situation to which they were reduced. The poignancy of Lord Lovelsdale's feelings, which, in this narrative, we have often taken notice of, can easily be imagined by the reader. Mr. Henry's heart was manly, but it was tender to the most exquisite degree.— He loved to excess, and felt all the tortures natural at parting with an object so beloved. Mademoiselle M——— had never told her love—

“ But let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,

“ Feed on her damask cheek.”

She found herself so reduced by illness, that a few days before the departure of Henry, she could no longer sustain the conflict.

“ I will go to my best friend,” said she,
“ and repose the sorrows of my heart in her
friendly

friendly bosom. She will pity, console, and teach me how to bear the weight of my afflictions.”—She sought Lady Middleton; she threw herself on her bosom.—“Pity me, my best friend,” said she, covered with blushes, “and do not, pray do not think ill of me for having a too susceptible heart. I love the charming Henry; it is not returned, and I shall die to obliterate my fault.”

Here a shower of tears stopped all utterance; she fled for comfort where she was sure to find it, if it was to be found. But before an affliction is digested, consolation ever comes too soon; and after it is digested, it comes too late. There is but a mark between these two, as fine almost as a hair, for a comforter to take aim at.”

Yorick himself was not possessed of more sensibility than Lady Middleton. She felt the full appeal made to her feelings; she praised the candour of her young friend, thanked her for the confidence she placed in her;

her, and said there was nothing unnatural in the attachment she confessed.

“He is worthy of you, my love,” said she. “And are you sure Henry feels no preference for you? You deceive yourself; for I am much mistaken if he is not even more partial. Yes, his lacerated soul suffers torments greater than your own.”

This was the comfort that raised the drooping spirits of Mademoiselle M———. Neither India, nor absence, nor the years that might intervene, nor any other circumstance, had power to afflict her. If Henry loved, it was all she wished—it was that sweet hope which soothed all her sorrows; her countenance at once brightened, and shewed the consolation she had received.

“Ah!” exclaimed she, “why did I not long since fly to dear Lady Middleton? All must be happy who are regarded by her.”

“I

“ I would make my sweet friend as happy as I am myself; by giving her to Henry, I think I should ensure it.”

Here Mademoiselle again burst into tears; her mind was taken captive;— she gloried in the chains she wore, when she thought he who bound them was himself immeshed. That night she enjoyed sweet repose; her dreams were calm; her soul was cheered with hope.

“ Should he die in battle,” she exclaimed, “ his last thought will be on me; our hearts are united. I will mourn my whole life for him, and exist on the thought that I was dear to him. Her looks mended, and her eyes resumed their former lustre. She pressed the hand of Lady Middleton on meeting her at breakfast. Henry’s looks were as much improved as Mademoiselle’s; he addressed her with more freedom than he had ever done; and Mrs. Markham remarked that they were both paler and thinner, but no other traces of disorder remained.

A riding

A riding party was spoken of the night before ; the ladies were in habits, the gentlemen in boots ; the day delightful, and they set off after breakfast. Henry contrived to engage Mademoiselle in a *tête-à-tête*, the subject of which the reader will be acquainted with, when we inform him that both Mr. Beaumont and Lady Middleton wished the connection from the moment they perceived the attachment ; but Henry's honour obliged him to go to India—that could not be put off, or laid aside. However, they were resolved to make both parties as happy as these circumstances would admit. Certain of a mutual love, they were convinced they would bear absence better than were they in doubt ; and, to contribute as much to their felicity as they could, Lady Middleton, on quitting Mademoiselle, sought Henry. She found him alone ; she took his hand.

“ Henry,” said she, leading him to a seat,
“ you are going in a few days to quit us ; I
feel

feel for you as a mother for a dear and only son—for your friend the Marquis, as a beloved brother. The evident unhappiness of two people so dear to Mr. Beaumont and myself makes us miserable. We know the cause of Lovesdale's, and mourn for him; but your's, Henry, from whence does your's proceed?"

Henry threw himself on his knees; his whole face crimsoned; he blushed to his fingers' ends.

"Did our ages permit, Lady Middleton," said he, "and were I so blessed as to call you mother, Henry would long since have reposed in your breast the secret of his sorrows: but when he considers what he is, that secret should remain for ever in his own."

"Rise," said she, "and hear me."

He obeyed, and sat beside her.

"In

“In every member of this house, Henry,” said she, “neither birth the most exalted, nor the greatest riches, could raise you in esteem. In the world’s eye they may be advantages; and for that world, I wish you may one day find yourself the possessor of them. That you have those virtues and talents that would reflect honour on any family, I hope you know to be our sentiments of you; and, were it agreeable to you, we would propose a connection on your return that will ensure you happiness the most complete. When you are inclined to marry, we would wish to lead your thoughts to my agreeable friend, Mademoiselle M——. We shall take upon us your establishment, should the mystery that hangs over your birth be then unrevealed.”

The transported Henry was again on his knees.

“Could

“ Could I have thought,” said he, “ that the penetrating eye of Lady Middleton would not inform her of the only secret I should ever think of keeping from her ! The weight of obligation you have laid on me forbids words. But Oh ! believe that my whole soul is filled with wonder at such transcendent goodness.”

“ Go to Mademoiselle,” said she, “ and pour out your heart to her ; and may you both, though at a distant period, be as happy as you deserve !”

Saying this, she left the room.

Henry could hardly credit his senses ;— his eyes followed her ; and when she shut the door, they were fixed on the space she had just occupied.

“ Has Lady Middleton not commanded me to the presence of her I have long loved ?” said he.—“ Can I then loiter ? No ! I will fly :

fly: perhaps her gentle bosom will not reject my faithful heart."

He went in pursuit of her, and found her resting with her head on her hand, and a book laying on the table before her. She started on perceiving him; she looked upon him with eyes full of tenderness and expression; they possessed all the powers of fascination, and Henry gazed upon her with all that admiration and love that speak more forcibly than words. She smiled upon him; a faint blush spread itself over her whole face; not a word was spoken; his cheeks flushed, and brilliant imagination danced in his eyes; he threw himself on his knees; he held her hands in his. There need no rhetoric, no ornament of speech, to varnish a tale of happiness. Here were plain simple nature, and passion without art. The different turns of their dispositions were woven together; and a remembrance of these soft moments enabled them to bear absence, and

and shorten the long space that would soon lay between them.

When the mind has long dwelt on a calamity which a heated imagination paints as impossible to surmount, it is surprising of what little moment are circumstances, which in themselves seem most unpromising. The riding party was the most pleasant Mr. Henry and Mademoiselle ever partook of; they were separated from all the rest for several hours;—future plans of happiness were spoken of; Oakley Park, and rural pleasures after the fatigues of war, were the objects of their sanguine hopes; and they parted with an enthusiastic belief that they should again meet, and be happy—they kept up each other's spirits to the last.

“ I shall pray, my Henry,” said she, “ for you incessantly; and Oh! may you enjoy that health and happiness, which, if you have not, I shall want.”

They

They all went down to Portsmouth, and saw them embark. They had the last moments together; and when they set off again for town, the sad image of sorrow in the noble Marquis and the beloved Henry occupied every thought of each individual for the whole journey, and many days after. It was thought better to appear in public, and the first place they went to was the Opera.

Lord Lovelsdale's going to India in the character of a soldier was a topic much talked of in the upper circles, and various were the different opinions on so extraordinary a matter. The Duc D'O—— made it his theme to Lady Middleton, and launched out a little too copiously on the strangeness of the subject, and asked if it was with the consent of the Duke his father.

“Some affair, I suppose,” said he, “some unfortunate and hopeless attachment has
thus

thus hurried him from his country and friends."

During these particular remarks, he kept a steady eye on her ; but conscious innocence shewed him a countenance free from fear. She talked naturally on the subject, though rather gravely, and he was glad to give up any further investigation ; he felt relieved by the absence of Lord Lovesdale, though he plainly saw he was nothing more to Lady Middleton than an intimate and regarded friend.

The papers the next day mentioned Lady Middleton having been at the Opera, lamented the alteration in her looks, and observed that the attention of two great personages could not cheer away the melancholy that clouded her fine countenance.

Mr. Beaumont had received two anonymous letters, warning him of his Lady's attachment but too evident for Lord Lovesdale,

Lovesdale, and containing all that may be supposed to be said on that subject by the writers of such letters ; but Mr. Beaumont burnt, and thought of them no more.— One day a third of the same kind was brought him, as he was going to the House ; he smiled on reading it, put it into the fire, and stepping into the coach, he pressed the hand of excellence, and pitied the depravity of man. Lady Middleton returned the pressure, and sweetly smiling on him, said—

“ How productive to all nature is the genial warmth of this day ! How much I should like going to Ankerwick Castle !— The season is now coming on that I take such delight in the charms of the country.”

“ Oh, how I long to get there !” said Mademoiselle, sorrowfully.

“ We cannot, I fear, before June,” said Mr. Beaumont.

When they had set him down, they drove to Hyde Park ; and though it was early,

they went into Kensington Gardens, where the heat of the sun enlivened every object, and unfolded the delicate tints of the children of Spring :—

“ Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds,

“ Exhilarate the spirit, and restore

“ The tone of languid Nature.”

Both these divine women felt the truth of these lines of Cowper ; they were delighted with the sweet notes that were chanted on every tree ; and Mademoiselle M——, sitting down on a retired bench to enjoy them, begged that Lady Middleton and Lady Sandford would walk without her, and pass by, on their return to the coach, the same way, when she would again join them.

Mr. Temple happened to have gone into the gardens after these ladies, and, without being seen, he watched their motions ; he saw her sit on the bench, and left by her friends ; she took out a picture, and wept bitterly.

“ Were

“Were those tears shed for me,” said he to himself; “I should lay aside all my improprieties, and take this lovely maid to some rural cot, and there live on love.”

Some other plans, however, wormed themselves into the head of Temple during his soliloquy and thoughts of amendment, ruminating on the charms of Mademoiselle; and he had time enough to digest them;—for the ladies took a long walk. Short were the moments, and rapidly they flew with her, lost in the contemplation of the manly graces and virtues of her Henry. They at length returned home, Mademoiselle eagerly wishing to repeat her visit there every day, which her friends were much pleased at, as they thought it would be greatly conducive to her health, and she was now become so dear to every one of the family, that they took the sincerest interest in every thing that concerned her.

Mr. Beaumont rode on horseback every day before breakfast ;—he thought time too valuable a possession to be sported with ; he possessed too many blessings to waste a moment of an existence both short and uncertain ; and in him, who was allowed to enjoy so many sources of real happiness, he thought it would be ungrateful to that Being, by whose bounty he was so greatly favoured. He was fully sensible of this truth, “ To enjoy is to obey.”

How fortunate it is when men of the greatest genius, and to whom power is given, have strong propensities to virtue ; for when they unite, they make any form useful, and any information interesting. Every thing comes with redoubled force from such characters ; for many have been preserved, as well as ruined by example.

One day, far advanced in April, he quitted his horse, and seeing a footman in his own livery, he asked which of his family were

were in the gardens? He was answered, Mademoiselle M——. He was this morning accompanied by a gentleman he was very fond of, and whose panegyric Monsieur Reynhault was very eloquent in to the governante, the morning she was feasting on his very best confectionary, if the reader will please to look back on the companion of Sir William Wanflow, Mr. Bentley.

“Come, Bentley,” said Mr. Beaumont, “we will go in pursuit of Mademoiselle M——, and bring her home to breakfast, for it is time,” looking at his watch, and seeing it was past ten; “I have exceeded my time, for ten is the breakfast hour.”

They walked therefore very fast through the gardens, and were much surprised at not meeting her. Mr. Beaumont began to feel uneasy. Mr. Bentley stopped.

“Hush!” said he; “don’t you hear a rustling noise in that thicket?”

They instantly went into it, and saw a man struggling with a woman. They were got pretty close before the man perceived them; but the moment he did, he leaped up, and ran off, as hard as he could, and trusted to the swiftness of his feet to save him from an eclairsissement on the business.

“Go, Bentley,” said Mr. Beaumont, “to the assistance of the lady, and I shall go after that villain, whoever he is.”

Mr. Beaumont was remarkable at almost all exercises, and he ran like a deer. He soon overtook his object, and, to his utter astonishment, found it to be Mr. Temple, whom he instantly collared.

“Your running off, Sir,” said he, “induces me to treat you thus roughly; and I shall take the liberty of holding you in custody until I enquire farther into this matter.”

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

FROM the moment Temple found himself in the hands of Mr. Beaumont, he gave himself up for lost. His impious coward soul no longer dared to look for safety ; he trembled from head to foot, and in this condition was brought up to Mr. Bentley and the lady, who, upon approaching near, was discovered to be Mademoiselle M-----.

Mr. Beaumont was a cool, steady, brave man—it was a difficult matter to put him into a passion ; but here was a scene sufficient to have raised and worked up placidity itself.

“Is this your prey?” said he, looking furiously at Temple, who, pale and breathless, did not articulate a word.—“I found this lady,” said Mr. Bentley, “with a handkerchief tied tight across her mouth, which could not have been on many minutes, as, when taken off, the mark looked quite fresh on her cheeks.”

Here Mademoiselle, for it was no other, overcome with fright, quietly sunk between them on the ground, and became totally senseless. Words cannot describe the feelings of the two gentlemen.

“This,” said Mr. Beaumont, “is Lady Middleton’s dearest friend, whom we came to seek.”

“Is it possible?” said Mr. Bentley.

She began now to shew some signs of life; they brought her to a bench; and when she was able to speak, she said—

“What

“What kind angel brought you into the gardens just time enough to save me?”

“Oh tell me,” said Mr. Beaumont, “all that has happened!”

She, in a very faint voice, said she had walked pretty quick from the gate, where she had left her servant. She had got near the clump of trees they found her in; she had stooped to take a little pebble out of her shoe, when suddenly she found somebody behind her, who held her head with a handkerchief, and got it in a moment into her mouth; that he had hurried her forward; that she had struggled as much as she could, but she had not the power to call for aid; and that he had just got her into the place they found her in, when their noise, she supposed, made him instantly quit her.

“Thank Heaven,” said Mr. Beaumont, “we did come! Did he offer you any farther rudeness?”

“No,” said Mademoiselle; “he had not time; or what treatment might I not have expected?”

“What have you to say for yourself, Sir?” said Mr. Beaumont.”

“That I have long adored Mademoiselle M——; ever since I saw her at Waltham Castle I have been her slave. I meant no otherwise to ill-treat her than frightening her into a consent of marriage.

“Villain! mean, equivocating villain!” said Mr. Beaumont.

He had a cutting whip in his hand, and he did not spare it on the face and shoulders of Temple, who made the best of his way out of the gardens, not quite so great a hero as at his entrance into them.

Mademoiselle, whose dress had suffered very little, was put into her carriage, into which the gentlemen got, and returned to Piccadilly. It was thought necessary to
keep

keep this a profound secret, lest Lady Middleton should be alarmed for the safety of Mr. Beaumont, in case of a *rencontre* with Mr. Temple, who might possibly resent the merited castigation he had received ; but he, most Christian-like, reflecting on the heinousness of the crime of taking the life of a fellow-creature, told Mrs. Marchmont and his friend Sir William he was unexpectedly called into the country, and quitted London the following day, determined not to put himself in the way of any of the Middleton family ; and his only remorse was, that his plan was so execrably bad, that it must have been totally impracticable, without her own consent, to carry her off from so public a place as Kensington Gardens, and of course his project must have failed ; but despair of ever finding another opportunity, after being on the watch so long, hurried him to an attempt which was next to an impossibility to succeed in.

Mr. Beaumont waited ; his friend, Mr. Bentley, expected to be called on as his second : but Temple was more than an hundred miles from London before they gave up the matter ; nor did he bestow a thought on any individual of the Middleton family, excepting Mademoiselle, for whom his passion burned fiercer than ever. He solaced himself with the utmost indifference at Bristol Wells, as he was perfectly regardless of censure, but had a most delicate sense of personal danger ; and when that was in question, was of a most pliable disposition. — He enjoyed an excellent constitution, a good fortune, and all those pleasures riches are supposed to bring a man of his character, and he was resolved to enjoy them as long as he could ; he found enough to flatter and fawn upon him, and most of his pleasures were within his reach.

Poor Mademoiselle's hurry of spirits brought on a fever, from which she narrowly escaped with her life : her recovery
was

was very slow ; the shock she received had the most alarming effects. Lady Middleton was absolutely petrified on hearing of the scene in Kensington Gardens ; it became now her study more than ever to meliorate every painful sensation in the bosom of her beloved friend.—

Mrs. Marchmont had, for some time, been attached to a very young man, whom she had been very liberal to, but, for want of her faithful governante, he was discovered going at a very early hour out of her house. The story went abroad ; she parted with the domestic who discovered it, and, in the course of a week, few of the whole circle of her acquaintance were ignorant of it ;—but still, though it gave her the greatest uneasiness, she continued her attachment to her young favourite, and indulged herself with his company oftener than prudence could justify. She had expended large sums on this gentleman, who launched out in all sorts of extravagance and dissipation. Her

beauty was going off, her bloom was fading, yet still she was agreeable to many; and while she was willing to supply him with money, he was able to persuade her she was a Venus.

It is very unaccountable, yet not less true, that our most favourite propensities give way to love—even avarice itself, of which Mrs. Marchmont was a strong instance: for though her principal study was amassing wealth, she now lavished it on this young man with heedless extravagance. She wasted immense sums on him, and never thought she gave him enough. To keep herself up, however, still with the world, she gave the most splendid routes and balls. There were some coolness and disaffection among her acquaintance, which mortified and hurt her very much; but where Lady Mary Wanslow attended, she was sure to bring numbers of the thoughtless and vicious. Deep play began to be a necessary attendant on her house; for without

out it she foresaw she should soon be deserted. Here Sir William, in the thoughtless levity of his heart, lost immense sums ; and Mrs. Marchmont herself was not by any means successful, which was a cause of some uneasiness between the lovers, as he preferred spending her money himself, to suffering her to lose it at play : and such was his influence over her, that she often descended to equivocating shifts, to disguise from him what he now, conscious of his power, but too sharply would reprove.

Summer now coming on, he insisted on her thinking of some watering place, where she could take her son, and that he would follow her there. Poor Mrs. Marchmont could not object to any of his arrangements ; and they fixed on Brighthelmstone, as bathing in the sea would be productive of health and strength to the young Earl of Belmore.

Sir

Sir William Wanflow had been taught to think it the most Gothic thing in nature to reside at his own country seat during any part of the summer. A month at Christmas indeed was necessary, which gave the town time to fill, and then a large party and a Theatre was quite the go, to pass away that dreary month. A Theatre then he determined to have, and he sent down to Wanflow Park proper people to conduct all the necessaries for it. Private Theatres about this time arriving at perfection amongst the great, Sir William was resolved he would not be outshone; but he agreed to attend Lady Mary to Brighton, as had been previously settled by her Ladyship and Mrs. Marchmont.

Temple's absence was a dreadful blow to Sir William; for he began to feel the absolute necessity of raising a fresh supply of money, his agent complaining that he had overdrawn him, and that he positively could not answer another draught. Agents are sometimes

sometimes very troublesome people; for though, when they find they have a giddy young man to deal with, they will advance, by being allowed a certain compliment for so doing; yet, when their employer gets on too fast, they are obliged first to remonstrate, point out the difficulty of collecting the rents, shew how much they are in advance in consequence of the backwardness of the tenants, and at last put a final stop to their answering any farther bills, except under certain considerations, which they well know, from distress, must be complied with; at the same time taking good care the money shall be forthcoming from the estate prior to the bills becoming due.—Those gentlemen agents, at critical periods, of which they are the best judges, in general prove very cautious; and poor Sir William's was a very cautious one. Some people, indeed, went so far as to say more of him; but one of his maxims was, that a man without money can do nothing—a man with money every thing. Besides, he had a scru-

a scruple of conscience;—Sir William was spending too fast; and he would not be accessory to the ruin of the heir of that family, to whom he owed much the greater part of what he possessed, by supplying him. This indeed, coming from him, hurt the credit of his employer; but that was not to be the good agent's consideration, particularly as it in a great measure obliged Sir William to have recourse to him alone, who had his welfare at heart, and would, if it must be so, supply him on more liberal terms than common money-lenders. Mr. Temple being out of town, Sir William was obliged to apply to this agent to raise ten thousand pounds, who, after a great deal of difficulty and expence in raising it, sold himself out of the funds, got a mortgage on Wanflow for it, and tenants made over to pay the interest.

The Theatre now went on with spirit, and at Brighton Sir William Wanflow and Lady were quite the go. The old story of Mrs. Marchmont's

Marchmont's gallant paying his addressee to her went round every circle ; but, being of Lady Mary Wanflow's party, she found no difficulty in being received.—Thus things were going on as agreeably as they could wish at Brighton, where we shall leave them to enjoy themselves, while we attend Mr. Beaumont and family to Ankerwick Castle. They arrived there just in time for the wedding of Mr. Wentworth and Miss Wilmot, and staid a fortnight longer than they intended, to entertain the wedding party ; for there were few families more highly esteemed by them than Mr. Wilmot's. They were under a promise of accompanying Lord and Lady Sandford to Appleby, on her Ladyship's first going there. The happiness and uniformly good conduct of Lord Sandford reflected the highest honour on his heart, and plainly shewed that the Duke of Devon knew his character better than the world.

Poor

Poor Mademoiselle M——— was infinitely recovered by the journey and the air of Ankerwick Castle. She was enlivened by the agreeable memorial of every thing that had given her pleasure when she was last there. All she now saw brought Mr. Henry to her remembrance; his picture, which hung in Mr. Selwin's apartment, was visited every day; she heard his praises from every tongue:—his horses, when she walked into the Park where they were consigned until his return—his dogs, that played with and fawned on her—and his beautiful barge, in which she had passed so many happy days on the lake with him, all were as so many friends to her. The whole family talked freely of him to her. These different indulgences had the happiest effect; and we may say, he was more like the beloved husband of this amiable woman than a lover.

The wedding party went to Appleby, where all the Devon family were expected; and

and the second son of Lord Seal was to be in England in the Autumn. He had married an English lady abroad, and the family received very good accounts of him.

Lady Ann Berkley's health was quite restored by the prescriptions of Mr. Beaumont, who found her complaint proceeded from worms. Her looks improved as much as her spirits; she was no longer known to be the same person; and Lord Seal was amply recompensed by her care and affection for the loss of Lady Mary.

Mr. Bentley seemed to pay that attention to Lady Ann at a very early period of the winter, which promised something serious; and prior to the Duke's leaving town, his proposals were accepted. Lord Seal added thirty thousand pounds to the twenty thousand left by Lady Seal, and the Duke of Devon also gave her an addition of ten thousand more; so that Mr. Bentley was to get a fortune of sixty thousand pounds.—He
was

was the third son of Sir Thomas Bentley, one of the most ancient families in the kingdom ; and his fortune, as a younger child, was but fifteen thousand pounds. He had no estate, but was a young man of the first rate abilities, and purest morals ; he was in Parliament, where he shone very conspicuous, but had no profession. However, he was thought, by the Devon family, to possess, in his virtues and character, what was equivalent to high-sounding titles and estates.—August, was fixed on for the marriage, and the whole family were highly pleased at the addition to it of so much real worth.

The Duke and Duchess, of Somerton and Lady Matilda were to visit Ankerwick Castle late in July ; and here indeed they almost lived. Lord Melville had gone away nobody knew where ; and though his agony at parting with Lady Matilda was beyond all idea, he had never spoken of marriage : and yet he was so esteemed for his noble qualities, and agreeable manners, that Lady
Matilda

Matilda made it a point with her father not to wound her delicacy by interrogating his Lordship on his conduct. However, the Duke and Duchefs were miserable, and found neither pleasure nor consolation but in the society of Ankerwick Castle. Here; therefore, they remained, and joined Lady Ann's wedding party at the Abbey of Devon; and went, at the season set apart for that feat, to Waltham Castle.

Mr. Beaumont was obliged to attend Parliament, which took them again to London; and the account of the safe arrival in India of Lord C———'s forces gave them new life. The letters received from Lord Lovesdale and Mr. Henry were productive of the greatest joy. The Marquis recovered rapidly on the voyage; nothing was ever equal to the effect the sea had on him.

Lady Middleton, whose situation required every degree of consideration, was made
truly

truly happy: and so much did Mr. Beaumont know she was interested, that he prepared her for the letters before they were received, lest a surprise, though so agreeable, should have any fatal effect.

Mademoiselle M——— felt that happy assurance of Henry's safe return from the beginning, that set her mind at rest, and she lived on the idea of his unalterable love.— Her mind had settled into a calm—she was cheerful; but that great volatility had in some degree gone off, though the playful eccentricity of her character still remained.

Lady Matilda received a letter from Lord Melville about this time from Nice; and though it contained expressions of the fondest love and attachment, yet it dwelt on his own unhappiness; wished Lady Matilda had never seen the unfortunate Melville; that he should be in England about June; but wherefore? only to subject himself to an additional portion of misery;—and in this
incoherent

incoherent manner covered an entire sheet of paper; concluding with entreating her pardon, and hoping she would pity him.

This letter she instantly took to Lady Middleton, who read it, and, on returning it—
“ I see,” said she, “ clearly the situation of the amiable Melville; he is under some engagement where his heart is no longer concerned, and the charms of my Matilda have made him play the truant.”

“ If that was the case,” said Lady Matilda, “ could I hope for happiness in a disposition so changeable ?”

“ Don’t let me do Melville disservice,” said Lady Middleton; “ he had a father; perhaps some promise to him might bind him where his heart never had been engaged.”

“ Then for the world,” said Lady Matilda, “ I would not have him break it.”

“ We ought not to draw any hasty conclusions,” said Lady Middleton.—“ When

he returns, perhaps he may make me his friend; I shall endeavour to induce him to do so; and trust me, Melville has not a heart to injure any one. Leave it then, my love, to his own virtue, and time will bring about my Matilda's happiness."

Her Ladyship used much the same arguments to the Duke and Duchesse, which in some degree reconciled them to Lord Melville's conduct.

CHAP. IX.

THINGS were not going on with equal prosperity either in Portman or Golden Square. The very great sums of money Mrs. Marchmont lost at play, and the excess of her attachment to Mr. Ross still continuing, whose extravagance knew no bounds, reduced not only the whole of her own capital, but also very large sums out of the estate of Lord Belmore. The revenue there was, to be sure, large, and Mrs. Marchmont thought she had a right to share it. She had an able assistant in these arguments in Mr. Ross, who had not the least objection to spend the boy's money, and leave his mother to account to him for it. She, however,

so totally gave herself up to this gentleman, that she thought of nothing but how to keep the conquest wholly to herself. Could she do that, nothing was too great a sacrifice ; fully sensible that a young man of agreeable manners, much life, and spirit, and only twenty-three years old, must be attended to, if a woman of forty-eight hoped to keep his affections alive.

Temple had joined them soon after they went to Brightelmstone, and, to his utter astonishment, found Sir William still continued fond to excess of Lady Mary. He thought some men unaccountably strange in their perseverance, and he only waited an opportunity to divide them for ever. He therefore, for several months longer, still continued to flatter Sir William's vanity ;— he attacked him in every weak part. Was there any man but his friend Wanflow, he would say, that he could bear to see the husband of the divine Lady Mary ?

The

The Theatricals at Wanflow Park served to give Temple numerous occasions of praising his friend's great taste and happy arrangements, and, with infinite pleasure, he had got the Baronet into his debt to the amount of several thousand pounds, which Sir William wished to pay off, being a debt of honour; but before they returned to London for the winter, Temple had got a mortgage on that part of the estate he liked best; for he would not for the world distress his friend to raise the money;—for which kindness Sir William gave due thanks, and thought no man had such a friend as Temple was. Three or four months in town made it necessary that Sir William should grant another mortgage to his friend; and, as all gamblers get fonder of play the more they lose, poor Sir William was seldom from the gaming-table, and whole nights he remained engaged in play.

During the summer excursion, and all the time they spent at Wanflow Park, the amour

between the accomplished Monsieur Chignon and Lady Mary was at a stand. Temple and Mrs. Marchmont were too penetrating for Lady Mary to expect to delude; she therefore was content with those trifling familiarities in which there was safety:—if her Abigail quitted the room when he was dressing her hair, Monsieur made the best of his time, as far as a chaste embrace, a soft kiss, or gentle squeeze; but nothing farther had ever passed—that could hurt the delicacy of Lady Mary. They both had been put into a terrible panic by Mr. Temple surprising them on the couch together, as has been related, and they had, from that time, used the greatest precautions.

Lady Mary preserved an appearance of the greatest dislike to Chignon, and he an equal share to his Lady; and the domestics thought it a severe mortification on her Ladyship not to be able to have a man immediately about her person, whom she might approve of more than Monsieur. All this the

the lovers managed with such address, that the real situation of things between them was never once suspected ; but when they arrived in town, and neither Temple nor Mrs. Marchmont were any longer impediments, Chignon then became very urgent indeed with his charming mistress to grant him still more, and became impatient for the completion of his wishes.—Women often go farther than they at first intend, when 'they' indulge themselves in familiarities which they think of no consequence : for though the heart had perhaps no part in them in the beginning, it seldom fails to take its share in the end. There may be some impropriety in making this observation in the present case ; for it appears that Lady Mary, at a very early period of her knowledge of Chignon, admired him. On her marriage she had given him an hundred pound bank note. This handsome donation probably was in consideration of his fidelity to his master ; or if that was a doubtful point, it might be as a stimulus to future fidelity.—

She might have wished to impress the mind of this handsome valet with the liberality, rank, and wealth of his future Lady ; but whichever of these motives was the real one, as it cannot be ascertained, the reader must remain, as well as ourselves, in ignorance ;—but the donation was considered so extremely handsome, and there was such a particular kindness in the manner of Lady Mary when she presented it, that the valet could not get it out of his head that he was a prodigious favourite ; and this perhaps suggested other things that fancy worked up into something very much to his advantage.

Sir William, promoting him with higher wages to wait on Lady Mary, gave him those opportunities of being always near her person ; and if Monsieur fell in love with Lady Mary, it is only what twenty other valets have done before ;—and it happened very unfortunately that the personal perfections of both exactly suited the taste of each other ; so that it is not to be wondered at

at that, at the present period of our history, the gallantry and assiduities of Chignon made an impression on a heart very susceptible of those sort of attachments.

Difficulties generally bind faster the chains of love; and during the summer excursion, and their stay at Wanflow Park, the eyes of Argus, in the heads of Temple and Mrs. Marchmont, which could not be eluded, kept them within bounds for so long a time, that when Sir William and his family were again settled in Portman Square, they felt themselves much more at liberty, though they still dreaded Sir William, who was a very spirited man, and very jealous of his honour. Many schemes were proposed by Chignon, but were rejected by Lady Mary as too dangerous; for she was conscious that Sir William loved her with the fondest affection;—he took more pride in her than even in his horses or theatre; and she knew if he discovered her, her life in all probability might be the sacrifice; for his temper was both

warm and rash to an extreme, so that there was a necessity for the greatest caution ;—for though the valet was a fellow of spirit himself, and had shewn his courage in many instances, yet he dreaded Sir William's knowledge of his passion for his wife, which was as violent as we suppose ever filled the bosom of a faithful valet before : and such power has sympathy, that Lady Mary felt all the torments of an equal flame.

Sir William had had, for the last week, a run of luck ; he won a few thousands, and was prodigiously elated at it. The dice owed him a d——d deal, and were now going, he thought, to clear scores. Lady Mary also got into spirits ; for she had found great difficulty in obtaining money enough to answer her own expences, and a set of troublesome tradesmen became very clamorous. The domestics of Sir William Wanflow were not, from either habit or principle, likely to improve a fortune ; and their principal servant found a great difficulty in
getting

getting on credit those things that were necessary for the support of the family, and began to speak pretty plain that he must resign his place, if all the old bills were not cleared off, or ready money found for the weekly expenditure of the house.

This complaint came in excellent time ; for Sir William was full in cash, and he paid the house-steward's bills up in full. This restored peace in the lower regions, and better living. Sir William felt himself greatly relieved--there were no sounds so discordant in his ear latterly as repeated calls for money ; therefore those who now asked, received,—that is, small sums ; it went among his creditors that he was full in cash, and they one and all sent in petitions that their demands might be paid off. This, however, was totally out of Sir William's power, for there were very heavy debts indeed against him, to the amount of several thousands ;—hundreds and fifties he was equal to ; but when one or two noughts were added, it was not within

either his inclination or ability ;—yet the press upon him was so extremely hard, he was obliged to come into terms with his jeweller, wine-merchant, &c. &c. in giving security, and allowing interest on the several sums.

This eased his mind for the present, and gave him a double relish for the gaming-table. He thought how happy he should be if he could clear off all the demands against him ; and with this too sanguine hope he hardly ever left it.

Chignon laid a plan before Lady Mary, that she thought would be attended with no danger, and therefore agreed to it, which was her giving a masquerade ; a few days before which Chignon would pretend illness, and keep his room, and sometimes his bed ; that Mrs. Marchmont should be privy to the secret ; and as Lady Mary and she were the same height, that she should dine in Portman Square that day ; that her masquerade dress should be sent locked up in a trunk, and that she

she should wear Lady Mary's, which was to be a superb dress of Nox with brilliant stars, and that Lady Mary should wear Mrs. Marchmont's, which was to be a man's domino; in which latter dress, as Mrs. Marchmont, her absence or presence would not be noticed in the crowd; and as Lady Mary looked remarkably handsome in a simple dress, she could easily lead Sir William to beg she would appear at supper, where every one unmasked, in the character of a shepherdess; that by this means, without fear of detection, they could pass a few happy hours together, and the change of dresses would elude all possibility of the slightest suspicion, particularly of Lady Mary's woman, of whom Chignon had some fears; and as she would be that night totally engaged, she could not possibly be any hindrance to the lovers.

In short, Chignon cleared away all difficulties with so much address, that Lady Mary consented, not reluctantly, to the scheme

scheme he laid before her ; and she promised to mention the masquerade to Sir William.

Elated with hope, this ardent lover purchased some valuable additions to his wardrobe, to make himself still more agreeable to his charming mistress, and waited on the tiptoe of expectation for the completion of his long expected happiness.-

Sir William readily came into the idea of the masquerade. Nothing he wished for so much ; it was the most charming way of passing a night, and actually, as Chignon foresaw, entreated that Lady Mary would appear in a superb dress, and afterwards change it to the most simple she could think of ; and that at supper, unmasked, she should outshine all others. So far all went well ; the Baronet thanked her for her ready compliance with his wishes, and nothing could exceed the conjugal felicity of Sir William and Lady Mary Wanslow.

Mr. Temple had long endeavoured to break the connection between Mr. Ross and Mrs. Marchmont; but he knew Mr. Ross to be a man he could not trifle with. He thought, however, he perceived a growing partiality in him for Lady Mary, and on this he built a structure, the planning of which engaged all his thoughts: he was possessed of all those requisites that so necessarily and so easily lead weak minds—that self-importance which, when joined to wealth, never fails to fill such men as Sir William with ideas of their superiority; and as they look up to the brilliant pattern they wish to imitate, they feel their own inferiority, and hope to lose it in the notice taken of them by the character they so much admire.

Ross's money had passed into the possession of Temple, as well as Sir William's;—and while he led them into every excess of expence, not from his example, for he seldom spent a guinea, he laughed at their folly, and partook in all the pleasures high living and agreeable

agreeable entertainments bring; and when they were often thoughtful and heavy at those scenes of extravagance and profusion, with the dread of approaching ruin, he enjoyed the gratification of a full purse and perfect ease.

Ross found great difficulty latterly in obtaining money from Mrs. Marchmont, and was sensible it proceeded from her own deficiency. He was conscious of the immense sums he had squandered; and began to fear she could not much longer supply him; for Temple had contrived such measures as totally prevented Mrs. Marchmont from spending much the greater part of the Belmore estate, which was the only source from which sprung, for several months, those sums that were transferred almost as soon as received, to different hands, in all the senseless dissipation and extravagance of weakness and vice.

Temple, meeting Ross one morning just at the door of Sir William's house, took him
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to pay a visit to Lady Mary ; and after chatting for a quarter of an hour, tapped at the window he was standing at, and begged Rofs would wait for him until he just spoke to a person he wanted to see on some business ;—and hurrying out of the room, he left Rofs to entertain Lady Mary, who, elated at the notice she had lately taken of him, and the friendly manner of Temple a few days past, was encouraged by these circumstances to make love in pretty plain terms. Though her Ladyship had long dismissed the grace of modesty, yet she well knew, on occasions, how to check ill-timed assurance ; and calling up a look, she asked Rofs what he dared to mean by thus insulting her ?

Rofs was confounded by her manner, and was on the point of submissively begging pardon, when he thought he perceived her features relax of their severity, and soften in his favour. He then threw himself at her feet ; and taking one of her hands, he pressed it with fervour to his lips. Just as
he

he was again seated beside her, the door opened, and Sir William appeared.

“What, Ross here !” said he, carelessly.

“Yes,” replied Lady Mary.—“Mr. Temple requested he would wait here until he had spoken to some person he beckoned to from the window, and I expect his return every moment.”

While she said this, she looked at Sir William, as if tired to death of the company of Ross ; and Sir William, to ease his beloved wife from any thing that could give her pain, took Ross out of the room, and shortly after out of the house.

Chignon had been tortured with a thousand jealous fears during this visit ; and as he saw his master and his companion quitting the house, he ascended the staircase with a card he had just received. As he came softly to the door, he heard Lady Mary sigh ; and on opening it, he saw her lost in thought.

thought. Chignon sighed too ; and as he presented the card, he carried the hand Lady Mary held out to receive it, to his lips.

“ Ah ! ” said he, “ Chignon is no longer dear to you.”

“ Ridiculous ! ” said she ; “ you must not torment us with all this nonsense ;—have I not proved to you my love by consenting to the masquerade ?—Go,” said she, patting his cheek with her beautiful white hand, “ go, Chignon ; would you were not so dear to me as I find you are ! ”

He sat himself down beside her, and throwing his arms round her waist, imprinted a thousand kisses on her ruby lips ;—and so much was their attention engaged, that they did not perceive the door open, until the person who opened it had advanced a few steps into the room, when they were roused, and both at once beheld Temple. Astonishment and rage were painted in his face ; he looked at Lady Mary, and then at the

the

the terrified Frenchman, who, prostrating himself, begged, in all the accents of despair, that he would keep what he had seen from his master.

As Chignon lay at the feet of Temple, imploring mercy and forgiveness, Temple, with haughtiness and contempt, kicked him several times, and ordered him to quit the room.

“I am jealous of my friend’s honour,” said he.—“What, Lady Mary intriguing with a sorry valet! By Heaven! I will this instant acquaint Sir William!”

Chignon, who was quitting the room, again returned, and entreated once more that he would not destroy not only himself, but his dear Lady.

“I know Sir William’s temper well,” said he; “he would stab us both; his ungovernable

governable temper would annihilate us both in an instant."

"Quit the room, I say," said Temple, "this moment, nor dare to speak another word."

Chignon, with trembling steps, reached the door, and descended the great stairs in all the misery of despair.

When Lady Mary found herself alone with Temple, she also condescended to plead.

"I am out of patience with you!" said he.—"A valet thus to engage your affections—to put yourself in the power of such a rascal! I cannot, I will not keep it from my friend! Poor Ross," said he, "a lively, agreeable, handsome fellow, who is dying for you—who would give worlds, if he possessed them, for the smallest of those favours you lavish on that wretched valet—how would he burn with rage and revenge, could he
he

he conceive it possible you took a menial to your affections ! Fie, Lady Mary ! I blush for you."

"Well, well," said she, "promise that you will not tell Sir William."

"For shame, for shame !" re-echoed he.

"I entreat, Temple, that you will grant me this favour : do not, for Heaven's sake, destroy me in the opinion of your friend !"

Temple turned on his heel, and walked to the window. Lady Mary threw herself on a sofa, and burst into tears. Temple took up his hat, and left the room. As he entered his own house, he met a genteel looking man.

"Here is my master, Sir," said the servant, who held the door in his hand.

"Have you any business with me ?" said Temple, touching his hat.

The man, with much humility, bowed low, and said he had taken the liberty of calling

calling upon him, and should consider it as a very great favour if he would allow him to speak a few words to him in private.

When the servant shut the door, the man apologized for the trouble.

“ Pray do not mention it,” said Temple ;
“ but inform me, without any farther preface, what is your business.”

The man bowed, and obeyed.

“ My name, Sir,” said he, “ is Nesbit ;— my family is large ; I have lately had some losses ; and a friend of your’s, Sir William Wanflow, is in my debt three thousand five hundred pounds. I have made many applications to him without effect for the money ; and having now an opportunity of laying out this sum to very great advantage, I was advised to wait on you, Sir as a gentleman very punctual in your own payments ; and as you have great influence on Sir William, if
you

you will speak to him in my favour, you will lay me under the greatest obligation; for really, Sir, if I lose so very large a sum as this, I shall be totally ruined."

Temple threw up his head significantly, on which poor Mr. Nesbit turned quite pale.

"Surely, Sir," said he, in a tremulous voice, "you do not think I am in any danger."

Temple shook his head.

"Good God, then," said the man, in an agony of despair, "I am a beggar, and my wife and children, what will become of them! I thought Sir William had a very fine estate."

"He *had*," said Temple, with emphasis.

"It is not all gone?" said the man, in a hollow tone.

Temple shrugged his shoulders.

Nesbit

Nesbit became the picture of despair—his distress would have worked on the feelings of most people ; but Temple only wished to get rid of him—he was therefore silent.—A few more supplicating entreaties, however, roused him, and he asked what he could possibly do in the affair.

“ But surely you do not want this money immediately ? ”

“ If I was certain of it in three months,” said Nesbit, “ it would be equal to receiving it this moment.”

“ Well, well,” said Temple, “ I shall speak to Sir William.”

Here the man poured forth his thanks, and with great humility asked when he should call upon him to know Sir William’s answer :—“ For I well know, Sir,” said he, “ if you will be my friend, Sir William will consider me one of the first.”

“Sir William Wanflow,” said Temple, very gravely, “owes me twenty-eight thousand pounds.”

“Ah! Sir,” said Nesbit, “but you have good security, I warrant.”

“For some of it I have,” said Temple, still more gravely; and after a pause of some moments, he told Mr. Nesbit to call on him that day three weeks.

“Ah!” said the man, “could you not make the time shorter?”

“Impossible,” said Temple.

“Because,” said Nesbit, “I know several trades-people who have not my patience;—and some reports, that have lately passed abroad, have alarmed them so much, that they are determined to have recourse to those means that will ensure them their money.”

“They need not be in such a hurry,” said Temple.—“I think there will be no great occasion for such vast hurry. However, if I can manage your affair in a shorter time than I have specified, you may depend on my sending to your address;” which

Mr.

Mr. Nesbit gave him, and bowing very low, departed.

With a mixture of hope and fear, he returned to his own house, and endeavoured to support the spirits of an amiable wife with those hopes which he did not wish to think too sanguine.

CHAP. X.

TEMPLE began to judge it was now high time to look a little about him. Things were arriving to the period he long foresaw ; he therefore conceived it but prudent to take care of himself first. He determined on immediately taking Sir William to Wanslow Park, and to circulate a report that the

Baronet was going to raise money on his estate ; but he very well knew that Sir William was totally ruined, and in debt some thousands more than all his property could pay. His first object was therefore to secure the best part of the estate to himself. At the dinner hour he repaired to Portman Square, and determined to talk seriously to Sir William on his affairs. No company being invited that day, he purposely sought Ross, and took him to complete the *partie quarree*.

“ We will dine with Wanflow,” said Temple ; “ and while I am talking after dinner with the Baronet on some business of great consequence, I shall envy you your *tête-à-tête* with his charming wife. She is certainly, Ross, a very lovely woman ; and I consider her a very virtuous one. I have found her most damnably rigid.”

This was a train he knew would soon take. The whole party were, to all appearance, in high spirits. Temple promised
Lady

Lady Mary, in a whisper, he would say nothing of the transaction of the morning, provided she promised she would discard Chignon from her affections. This she readily did, and peace was again restored to the virtuous and amiable Lady Mary.

After dinner, when Temple was left alone with Sir William, he told him he purposely dined with him that day, to point out the necessity of warning him of his safety.

“Several of your creditors have been with me,” said he; “and, from their manner, I fear they will take some coercive steps against you. It is unfortunate that you are not in Parliament, for I have very great fear for your safety; and it would be a d——d thing to have you once get into the Bench—you would never get out.”

“Never get out!” exclaimed the Baronet, with horror.

“Never, upon my soul,” said Temple.

“What is to be done?” said Sir William.

“ I should be really happy to serve you,” said Temple ; “ but if either an arrest on your person, or an execution in your house, should take place, all I am worth would not save you ; for my means are really small.—I am myself in debt, so that my ruin might follow your’s.”

“ Oh my friend,” said Sir William, “ you always acted nobly by me. I will instantly secure you”

“ I was thinking,” said Temple, “ I would bring you all the money I can gather, by which means your credit can be kept up a little longer, and you and I can settle that matter. I leave every thing to your honour, Sir William ; I know I may depend upon you.”

“ How much can you let me have ?” said the Baronet.

“ Why,” said Temple, “ there was an old debt of ten thousand pounds on my estate, with many others. The money is in the funds to pay that off ; and knowing your distress, I yesterday went to the old gentleman

to

to whom I was to pay it, and I think I shall be able to prevail on him to let me hold it for six months longer. This you shall have; and if you act prudently, it will prevent all those dreadful inconveniences I so much fear; for it is a d——d thing to get into the mouths of the public.”

“We must avoid that, if possible,” returned Sir William; “and all my dependence is on you, my best friend.”

Temple proposed their going for a few days together to Wanflow Park.

“It will look well, I think,” said he;—“and out of the money I shall give you, settle with a few of your most pressing creditors, and that will give the rest spirits to wait your time.”

The Baronet, in the highest raptures, drank several bumpers to the health of his dear friend. The idea of having ten thousand pounds at his command left no regret

on his mind for the heavy difficulties that were crowding fast upon him.

“ There is one thing, however,” said Temple, “ I wished to speak to you upon, and which I hope you will excuse. Lady Mary mentioned to me her intention of having a splendid masked ball in about three weeks ;—let me beseech you not to think of it ; live quietly for the remainder of the winter, and you will find your account in it. When a man so heavily in debt runs on in such heedless expence, it makes every one you owe a guinea to resolve to be paid ; as they think, if you are able to find money for such foolish and expensive entertainments, you can easily find it for them if you please.”

“ How, Temple,” said Sir William, “ shall I be able to disappoint Lady Mary ?”

“ Reason with her,” said Temple.

“ No,” said Sir William, “ I would not distress her ; I would not see that fine countenance clouded with regret and uneasiness for worlds ; she is a most amiable creature,”

creature," continued the Baronet, "and I cannot make her unhappy."

"Will you suffer me then, Sir William, to break your wishes to her, that this masquerade should be put off till next winter."

Sir William sighed; and after some hesitation he said, "Well, my friend, do as you please; but do not, do not distress her."

Temple could hardly restrain his desire of opening his friend's eyes and understanding to the real character of this amiable creature: but his plans were not yet ripe for execution; he therefore assured Sir William he might depend on his delicacy, in not wounding the feelings of his charming Lady. They then ascended the staircase to join Lady Mary and Mr. Ross: the room was, however, empty, and on ringing to know the cause, they learned that Mr. Ross had left the house at an early hour of the evening, and Lady Mary was gone to the Opera. Her Ladyship, however, did not appear at the Opera that night; where she did go to, must remain

a secret for the present: and as soon as Temple wished his friend good night, Sir William stepped to the gaming-table, just, as he thought, to look on, and early morn saw him return to Portman Square, elated with the success of the night;—for on the idea of Temple's supply, he bet boldly, and found large stakes flow into him; and at the conclusion he rose winner of a very considerable sum. He was for once prudent;—Temple had alarmed him, and he paid off the whole of it to the most rapacious of his creditors. His success continued for a few nights; and while the fit of fear continued, he was just, and paid it away.

In a few days Sir William and Temple went to Wanflow Park:—the credit of the former was again beginning to hold up its head; his servants were returning to their former respect, which latterly they were inclined to neglect a little; but servants cannot always be upon their guard any more than

other people, nor can it reasonably be expected that when a man is distressed, he should *bona fide* be respected, or considered the same person as when his coffers were full. No, no, he undergoes an entire change ;— even his very words and actions in a moment suffer with his purse. To-day his company is sought ; he gives general satisfaction : how agreeable, how handsome, how amiable ! To-morrow comes ruin, and with it all its chain of concomitant evils. The world wonders how he could ever have engaged its attention, so dull, so spiritless, and then so very weak and imprudent ; and, after an intimacy of years, they find out, in an instant, many points in his character extremely reprehensible. Neglect and contempt follow, and he is no more remembered.—Oh gold ! how great is thy virtue ! Those who have thee, possess all this world can give ; and those who have thee not, nothing. Fame, honour, and truth, without thee, are idle fancies of the imagination ; for the man of

real worth, who becomes a beggar from unforeseen misfortune, which no impropriety of his brought on, nor no human foresight could have prevented, is classed with the profligate gamester. The undistinguishing world hears with apathy his fall from affluence, but considers not from what cause that fall proceeded—it is all-sufficient that the wealth is gone.—

Some time after the birth of the young heir, Lady Middleton's appearance began to change ;—she became pale and thin ; her spirits were no longer the same ; and though none of the professional men could discover the cause, yet she seemed evidently falling fast into a decline. When Mr. Beaumont caught the alarm, she confessed to him she had never found herself well in London ; but that, as it was necessary he should remain in town, she never had mentioned it. His heart filled with terror when, on the consultation of physicians, he found them ignorant of the cause of her complaint, though
clear

clear in their opinions that an approaching decay was to be dreaded. They ordered her to Ankerwick Castle, to make trial of her native air ; and, if there was not a favourable change, an immediate removal to the South of France.

Spiritless and wretched was every member of this once happy family, that now mournfully set off to Ankerwick ; yet the unhappiness that preyed upon them was covered by an affected cheerfulness that was seen through by the invalid, who did not think any real cause existed for the alarm of her friends : for no bodily pain had yet assailed her, and she was persuaded that the air of those beloved scenes, which early happiness and present felicity rendered so dear to her, would invigorate her strength, and restore her spirits to their wonted tone.

They made it two days' journey ; and as they approached Ankerwick Castle the second day, she seemed already to have gained
additional

additional strength and spirits. This dear idea threw animation on every countenance ; and when the carriages ascended an high hill, that shut out from their road the view of the Castle, the landaus were both let down, and they drove abreast.

“ Oh what a lovely day ! ” said Lady Middleton. “ How pure the air ! I feel already renovated.”

The view before them was enchanting :— on every side appeared the majestic pine covered hills, that vied with each other for pre-eminence. The varying lights that fell upon the delicate tints of the new budded foliage caught the pale shade, and stretched along the darker green, adding, as it went, redoubled beauties. The blue smoke curling high in air, seemed to welcome them to the grand and hospitable mansion which stood boldly to the west. The evening sun shone full on the Castle ; the green pastures and cultivated plains formed a wonderful contrast to
the

the picturesque magnificence of the surrounding mountains, whose thick-cloathed sides and towering tops seemed to stand proudly confident of their great effect in the landscape.

As they descended the hill, the trees, that impended over the road, and formed a line of perspective with the distant scene, threatened to seclude any farther view ; and as the carriages rolled into darkness, the soul of Mr. Beaumont filled with anguish : he pressed the hand of his beloved Gertrude, and thought of her situation with a terror that shook his whole frame.

“ When last we viewed these hills and dales together,” said he to himself, “ she who now sits beside me was full of health and strength ; now the heavy eye and fading cheek warn me of misery and woe. Oh Gertrude, Gertrude ! live, or one grave must hold us both !”

The

The bells from the distant steeples, the great guns from the battlements, the general rejoicings for their arrival, still added horror to the gloomy soul of Mr. Beaumont ; and yet the animated eye of his beloved beamed comfort, and as they drove along the verdant lawns into the park that surrounds the Castle, bade him hope those shades, her native shades, would soon restore her wonted bloom and health.

Lord and Lady Sandford had just arrived before them ; they had spent the winter at Appleby, and Lady Middleton seemed highly gratified by the presence of her friend.

“ I cannot want health surely now,” said she ; “ for I want nothing that can give me pleasure.”

Mr. Beaumont longed for an opportunity of finding Lady Sandford alone, to learn her opinion ; for as she had not seen Lady Middleton for four months, he thought she could
best

best inform him of the change in her appearance. It was not until after breakfast the next morning that he could gain the wished-for interview.

“ Tell me,” said he, “ dear Lady Sandford, “ what you think of my Gertrude.—Is she as ill as from my account you expected to find her ?”

Lady Sandford loved Lady Middleton with the truest sincerity ; her own sensibility had been dreadfully wounded by the sudden account of her illness ; and her fears for her highly-esteemed friend had worked on her imagination, and produced such a dreadful image of disease, that she expected to find her in the last stage of a consumption. Not finding, however, all these dreadful symptoms exist that her terrified imagination had painted, she gave a loose to her joy ; and minutely enquiring into the real state of her friend, she had every expectation that the fine air of Ankerwick would restore her.—

As

As the effects of London air had been the cause, she doubted not but the change would bring with it all that was desired.— She knew the feelings of Mr. Beaumont, and she understood the language that speaks at once to the heart, the sympathetic balm that reaches the soul, that brings sweet hope and consolation.

Beaumont felt revived by the foothings of good sense and sensibility, and quitted Lady Sandford to attend Dr. Hill, of whose professional knowledge he had as high an opinion as of the rectitude of his heart. With a throbbing breast and agitated manner he asked what he had to hope; and as he asked the question, he seemed to want breath to give him articulation. Dr. Hill, seeing his extreme distress, in a very unembarrassed manner assured him these violent fears were without foundation.

“ I shall,”

“ I shall,” continued the Doctor, “ take the management of Lady Middleton entirely on myself;—I know her constitution; I have traced the source of her present complaint, and I am certain I shall be able to remove it. This is the beginning of May; she shall remain in her native air till September, when she shall move for the winter to a warmer climate, and I think the following Summer she will return perfectly well. Observe, I do not send Lady Middleton to Lisbon, to cure her malady; I send her there merely to avoid the cold frosts and damps of this kingdom, to prevent a return of the complaint I have no doubt of removing before she quits England. I must prohibit dancing, water parties, and large companies.

The heart of Mr. Beaumont threw from it a load that began to be too heavy to sustain; he pressed the hand of Dr. Hill.

“ You

“ You have given me new life,” said he ;
“ I put implicit faith in your opinion.—
That great Being, who has bestowed so
great a blessing on me, will not yet, in his
mercy, deprive me of it.”

“ I trust not, my good Sir,” resumed the
Doctor ; “ we have to hope so bright an ex-
ample as Lady Middleton will be allowed
to remain very many years for the good of
society. But let me tell you, you have
yielded too much to these violent fears ;—
your excessive indulgence of sorrow weighs
down the elasticity of your spirits ; and if
you do not assist yourself, you will, in a very
little time, stand more in need of medical
aid than her Ladyship.

Mr. Beaumont made very light of his
own disease ; yet Dr. Hill thought it so
serious, that he had a long conversation with
Mrs. Markham and Lord Sandford con-
cerning it, which awakened all their fears.—
For a few following days, however, the in-
creased spirits of Mr. Beaumont lulled those
anxieties

anxieties to rest; for the prescriptions of Dr. Hill had an immediate effect on the constitution of Lady Middleton: and before she had been a week at Ankerwick Castle, there was an apparent amendment.

Mr. Beaumont, re-animated by the progressive recovery of his Gertrude, was hardly sensible of the indisposition that had for some days oppressed him; his animal spirits were afloat, his mind at peace, yet bodily disease began to prey upon him too much to be longer unattended to.

Mrs. Markham first perceived his change of countenance; for Dr. Hill had given her the idea, and she was upon the watch.—She followed him into the dark walk, along the east wing of the Castle, a place he was particularly fond of. On hearing footsteps, he turned to see who was following him, and, on perceiving Mrs. Markham, he stopped, it being a walk she never frequented.

“ Well,

“ Well, my dear Madam,” said he, taking her hand, “ what has induced you to come into this retired spot ? I do not recollect ever having seen you in it before.”

“ Women, my dear Sir,” said she, “ you know are subject to change, and there are few more frail than myself ; do not despair of seeing me here every day, and of its becoming my favourite lounge. Nay,” continued she, “ the change that has been brought about in my Lord Sandford by matrimony, has given me such a taste for that state, that I purpose, on my arrival at Lisbon, to set my cap at the first Grandee that suits my fancy.”

Mr. Beaumont laughed heartily at this little fallacy of pleasantry, and shaking cordially the hand he still held—“ How few are there,” said he, “ blessed with all my good friend possesses, where good sense and good humour unite a sprightly wit and purity of heart !”

“ Hold !”

“ Hold !” said Mrs. Markham ; “ don’t give me a taste for these encomiums, lest my Grandee may not understand the mode of gratifying my self-love, and I should die of *ennui* six months after I became a bride.”

As they were thus chatting, they arrived at the end of the walk, which opened into a woody glen, on the margin of a rivulet that descended from a distant hill, whose course had been led in a meandering direction, and lost itself in the thick woods that impended over it. Animated by the beautiful scene before them, they conversed with unusual cheerfulness. The refreshing breeze, the balmy air, the murmur of the distant waters, the sweet notes that were chanted from every bush, seemed to re-animate the soul of Beaumont. Returning health, for a moment, flushed on his cheek ; the mind was charmed, and diffusing its power over the body, the countenance beamed with the joy imparted from the feelings within.

Mrs.

Mrs. Markham observed it, and found it gradually pass off: the cheek flushed no more, and the eye again returned to that heaviness which had first caused her alarm. She then led the conversation on Dr. Hill's professional abilities, the certainty of Lady Middleton's perfect restoration to health, and then passed on to the distress the ignorance of all the physicians in London had thrown them into.—“Had my sweet Gertrude mentioned the effect the air of London had on her, you would have been saved many a severe pang; but she thinks more of every body than of herself.”

“I should so,” said Mr. Beaumont, putting his hand on his head.

“And had any complaint seized you,” added she, “from your alarm, think how much it would impede her recovery.”

Mr. Beaumont started. Mrs. Markham was not aware of the import of her words;—for she had little idea the complaint she wished

wished to prevent by early caution, was already fixed, and that the fear of giving Lady Middleton this alarm had prevented Mr. Beaumont from giving the smallest hint of the illness that he felt was not to be shaken off: and at the moment Mrs. Markham joined him, he was meditating on the best means of breaking the matter, when her agreeable rattle, the beauty of the morning, and the refreshing perfumes from Nature's most charming works, led his thoughts from himself; but the charm was giving place to pain when she began the subject that brought his thoughts once more to his own situation, and he confessed to her that he had been ailing for several days.

“The shock was too great for me,” said he.—“Could I be well when all I held dear to this heart was in danger?”

Mrs. Markham used those arguments best adapted to ease his mind, and she took upon
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herself to mention it to her beloved friend in such a manner as should not alarm her.

“Mademoiselle M———, whose sensibility is exquisite, is ill also, which I shall first mention to Lady Middleton. This will divide her attention a little, and lessen the weight of your disorder in her eyes. You know her attachment to that charming girl. She was like yourself, my dear Sir,” continued Mrs. Markham, “in the joy of Lady Middleton’s recovery—she was no longer sensible of her own indisposition.”

“And is the sweet girl very ill?” said Mr. Beaumont.

“She is far from well,” replied Mrs. Markham; “but I have prevailed with her to give way at last, and take Dr. Hill’s advice, which good example I hope you will follow.”

“The Doctor is not to visit Gertrude until to-morrow,” said he.

“I have

“I have written him a note this morning,” continued Mrs. Markham; “and, to prevent Lady Middleton’s alarm, one of the grooms, not being very well, is to be the excuse of his appearance at the Castle this day.”

“I shall see the Doctor in my library,” said Mr. Beaumont, “unknown to Gertrude, and shall trouble you, on your return, to give directions to that purpose; and I hope his excellent remedies will set up both Mademoiselle and myself.”

“Without doubt,” said Mrs. Markham, going into the house.

CHAP. XI.

MR. BEAUMONT took another turn in the garden slowly ; he reviewed the past, was thankful for the present, and looked forward to the future with hope and resignation. The distant sound of horses' feet made him think Dr. Hill was coming, and he walked softly into his library, which, before he reached, the Doctor had occupied ; for Mr. Beaumont felt himself so weak, that he could not use much expedition.

“ I do not find myself very well, Doctor,” said he, holding out his arm : “ will you feel my pulse, and set me to rights ? ”

Dr.

Dr. Hill felt his wrist ;—there was no look of sagacious deliberation betrayed on the countenance of this good man ; he had studied human nature as well as physic, and he made it a principle in his practice never to alarm except when a near approach to death made it inhumanity not to give timely notice to the patient of dissolution. He left much to nature, and never gave medicine unless absolutely necessary.—From appearances in the present case, however, he was not free from alarm, though his look and manner gave no indication of his real sentiments ;—he made light of it to Mr. Beaumont, and said a slight degree of fever, brought on by uneasiness of mind, made it necessary to take a little blood, which, with a warm bed, and a few days' confinement, would, he hoped, perfectly restore him. They then joined Lady Middleton, who was mending every day.

“ Mr. Beaumont has got a little feverish cold,” said Dr. Hill ; “ I want to take

a little blood from him, and to confine him for a few days, that it may go off without giving us any farther trouble."

Lady Middleton was alarmed, and entreated that he would comply with Dr. Hill's advice, which, though Mr. Beaumont appeared to her to laugh at, he every moment found the necessity of.

"Here is Mademoiselle M——— also ailing," said the good man; "let me settle you, my good Sir, that I may see what is the matter there. London air and London hours," said he, leaving the room, "do not agree with any of you."

Mademoiselle M———, whose sensibility was exquisite, had received a degree of alarm, when she found Lady Middleton was supposed to be in a consumption, that struck to her soul. She suppressed her feelings, which hurt her infinitely; and when she found her dear friend was by Dr. Hill pronounced
not

not in the danger she had taught herself to believe, her joy had nearly the same effect on her delicate frame ; and though she gave a loose to her happiness, she could not, for several days, rally her spirits. Lady Sandford's arrival at the Castle gave her great pleasure ; and Ankerwick, after her mind had been set at ease, was all to her it had ever been. She returned with delight to that liberty which a London life unavoidably restrains—to the beloved shades, where, by the side of Henry, she rambled, unconscious of the fulness of her happiness—shades whose sweet calm disposed her to receive pleasure from every surrounding object.—As she fauntered over his beloved haunts, his dear image filled her soul, and she felt a painful, yet pleasing sensation at the review of those scenes which brought fresh to her memory his looks, his attitude, his sentiments on different subjects. She sat herself under a large oak tree, and gave a loose to those feelings which it is doubtful whether they partake more of pleasure or pain.

They were, however, so congenial to the state of her mind, that, relieved from the long oppression she had felt, by the tears those scenes caused to flow, she remained unconscious of the setting sun, its being far sunk under the horizon, and that the light which then beamed was from the moon.— As she had wandered far from the Castle, fear roused her, and she arose, hesitating which way she should go—round the gravel road, which was near two miles, or across the low meadows, which was not quite a mile. She heard a dog bark, and she thought she perceived a man approaching her as she had advanced a few steps from the tree : she was in doubt whether she should proceed, or return and hide herself under its friendly branches. She, however, did neither ; for the shadow of the man passed off, and she lost it presently in distance. The bark of the dog lessened to her ear ; and concluding they were going away from the Castle, and would give her no disturbance, she stepped forward, and resolved to go the shortest way.

She

She felt herself extremely cold ; and as she walked through the grass, she felt the dew pierce through her shoes and stockings, and the wet to her feet and legs cold and uncomfortable. She walked as fast as she could, until she gained a distant plantation, where the lights from the Castle illuminated the scene, and took off that great gloom that had, for the last half hour, clouded her soul. She quickened her pace, and on entering the drawing-room, the cheerful gaiety within, contrasted with the uneasy sensations she had experienced without, restored her spirits, and joining in the conversation, and accounting for her lonely walk, she remained till she no longer was sensible of the wet and cold to her feet, and sitting down after tea to the organ, she did not think of changing. The day after she found herself not well ;—and the second day, mentioning it to Mrs. Markham, Dr. Hill was sent for on the third after that on which she had been wet ; and when he visited her, he found her far

from well, yet none of those alarming symptoms that too evidently belonged to Mr. Beaumont. He mentioned his fears to Lord Sandford and Mr. Selwin, and also to Mrs. Markham, and, unknown to Lady Middleton, sent off for more advice, not but he thought himself fully competent to the disorder; but as it was violent, fearing lest any accident should happen, he thought it necessary, for his own comfort, to call in more help.

The third day the fever arrived to a very great height; and not till then could they, with any propriety, acquaint Lady Middleton with the danger. The arrival of more medical aid would have terrified her beyond any other appearance; for it would have shewn her the abyss in which she was going to be plunged, as she knew that not only she herself, but Mr. Beaumont, would have rather depended on Dr. Hill's single skill, than the united efforts of the whole Faculty. They therefore thought it more prudent

prudent to keep her in ignorance of this step; and when she was by force taken from the sick room by Dr. Hill's positive directions, and the medical men were admitted to consult on the state of the patient, they gave no hopes, and were clearly of opinion that the brain would be affected the next day about noon, and that Beaumont, the benevolent, the learned, the witty, the amiable, and beautiful Beaumont would, in all probability, on the fourth from that day, expire raving mad.

Oh what a scene was exhibited at the Castle! None were ignorant of this dreadful sentence but Lady Middleton and Mademoiselle M——. The rest of the family met in consultation to debate on the propriety of informing Lady Middleton of the real state of Mr. Beaumont;—he was then perfectly in his senses; he might have many things to communicate to his beloved wife and friends; it would be a mistaken tenderness, and very reproachable to keep

them in ignorance of the fate that awaited them. They summoned Dr. Hill, and were resolved to act by his advice. Mr. Selwin went to him. The Doctor said the professional gentlemen then in the house were learned and worthy men; they had given their opinion, and he knew they had reason for the conclusions they drew. At the same time he said he differed with them in some points; he supposed a delirium would come on about the time they mentioned, but he had some hopes it would not continue, and that there was a possibility of the patient doing well. He would therefore recommend, from the delicate state of Lady Middleton's health, to defer those dreadful tidings until the next day, for that no delirium could take place before the noon of the following day; and calming her mind, in the hopes of taking some rest that night would enable her to bear the scene of the following day with more strength and resolution.—“The watchings and painful agonies of this night should be avoided, if possible,”

said he ; “ and if I see not what I expect by nine o’clock in the morning, I shall be the first to advise their both being made acquainted with their situation.”

This was decided, and Dr. Hill sat up with Mr. Beaumont all night. At two o’clock the other physicians entered Mr. Beaumont’s room, and were still of opinion he could not live. At three they retired to rest ; at four Dr. Hill gave him something out of a phial, which he took from his pocket ; and though it was not opium, the patient slept for near an hour. At nine Dr. Hill met the family, and still gave them hopes.

“ I am unwilling,” said he, “ to put that divine woman to the torture ; we’ll try, if possible, to prevent it.”

At noon, as had been predicted, Mr. Beaumont began to rave. This awoke Lady Middleton as from a dream ; she had watched

watched a great part of the night with Dr. Hill, and had hopes, when she went to take some repose, that all would yet be well ; but when she returned, his wanderings renewed all the terrors which she had before suffered ; and though scarce able to support herself under this sudden shock, she tried to conceal her sufferings.

As she sat by his bedside watching the ravings of her dear, her beloved Beaumont, her heart almost burst at the dreadful sight. His eyes, that but a few days since beamed with love and joy, that never saw distress without feeling compassion, and relieving it, now wildly stared around. Those lips, which never opened but to confer either instruction or happiness, now incoherently wandered without an idea to direct them.

“ Oh day of woe !” said she, as she struggled to acquire firmness to bear the scene before her, and fainted in Mrs. Markham’s arms. They conveyed her to her chamber,

as

as it was now necessary the physicians should come in to Mr. Beaumont.

Lady Middleton continued for a long time ill, which so alarmed Dr. Hill, that he forgot, for a moment, the greater danger of Mr. Beaumont. On her recovery, she insisted on being taken to his room, and begged she might not be removed while he yet remained an inhabitant of this world.

Dr. Hill now spoke some words of comfort, but she seemed fixed in her own opinion that he could not recover. Hour after hour she watched the ravings of his disordered brain: he at length was silent a few minutes, and then began to sing the most melancholy airs. Tears ran down the faces of all present. Lady Middleton gazed at him for a moment with an expression of unutterable anguish; a convulsion seized her, and she sunk senseless on the bed.— They administered every means in their power

power to restore her, without effect ; and she was once more taken to her own room.

Lady Sandford was so exhausted by this dreadful scene, that she was also removed, and put to bed ; still the melancholy sounds of Mr. Beaumont reached her ears, and still the wild cadence died upon her senses ;— she could not tranquillize her spirits ; what she had witnessed, agitated and afflicted her so much.

Mrs. Markham began also to sink under fatigue and distress of mind, and poor Mademoiselle M—— remained still in much danger, though comparatively happy in her ignorance of the situation of her dear friends.

Lady Middleton had again entered the room, and again placed herself by the bedside of Beaumont, who still remained insane. About twelve that night his ravings, arriving to an extreme of violence, Dr. Hill asked Lady Middleton if she would consent
to

to his making trial of a favourite medicine of his, as he had every hope of its success.— She was surprised at his asking her consent, and begged to be informed of his reason.— She then first was told of the professional assistance he had at an early period called in for his own satisfaction.

“ For your peace,” said she, “ Doctor, I am happy you did so ; but if you cannot recover him, I should have little faith in any medical assistance. You have my entire approbation to make any trial you please ; a miracle alone can save him.”

She knelt down by the bedside, and taking one of Beaumont's burning hands in her's, she raised her eyes to Heaven, and continued some time in prayer. The physicians now stood round the bed ; still the sweet but melancholy sounds of Beaumont struck each ear, and moistened every eye but those of Lady Middleton, whose sorrows dried up that source of relief. They
now

now gave it as their decided opinion that he could not live to the end of the next day.

Dr. Hill then said, with much modesty, that he really differed from them, and that, from the beginning, he had entertained some faint hopes of his recovery ; and as it was their decided opinion that the patient could not live, and they had no medicine to offer, from which they could form any expectation, he would administer a draught which he had every hope would prove of use. They bowed and retired, with an encomium on both his knowledge and attention.

Mr. and Mrs. Selwin, and Mrs. Markham joined in prayer, as did the amiable Dr. Hill, who had never left the room for half an hour together since Mr. Beaumont was taken ill. In about six hours he expected his medicine would take effect.—Lady Middleton spent most of those hours
on

on her knees in prayer; for though she had every reliance on Dr. Hill's opinion, she feared the worst. She did not think her adored husband could live; and she seemed to be employed in fortifying her mind to bear, with patience, the trial she was certain was preparing for her.

END OF VOL. III.



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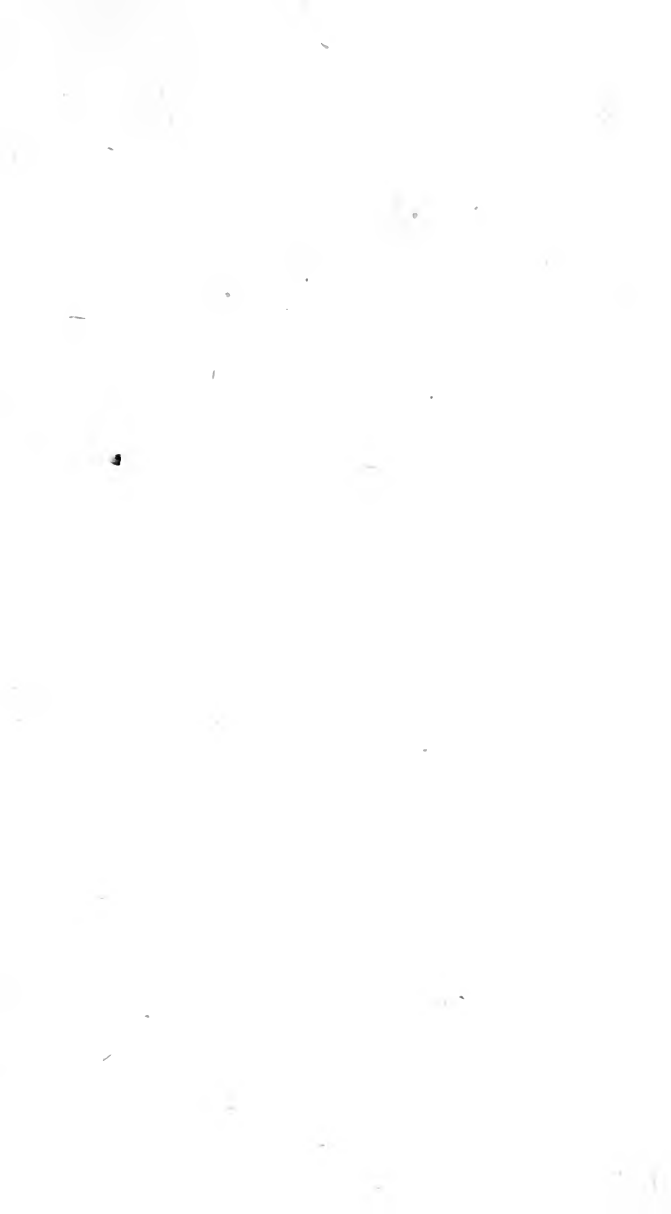
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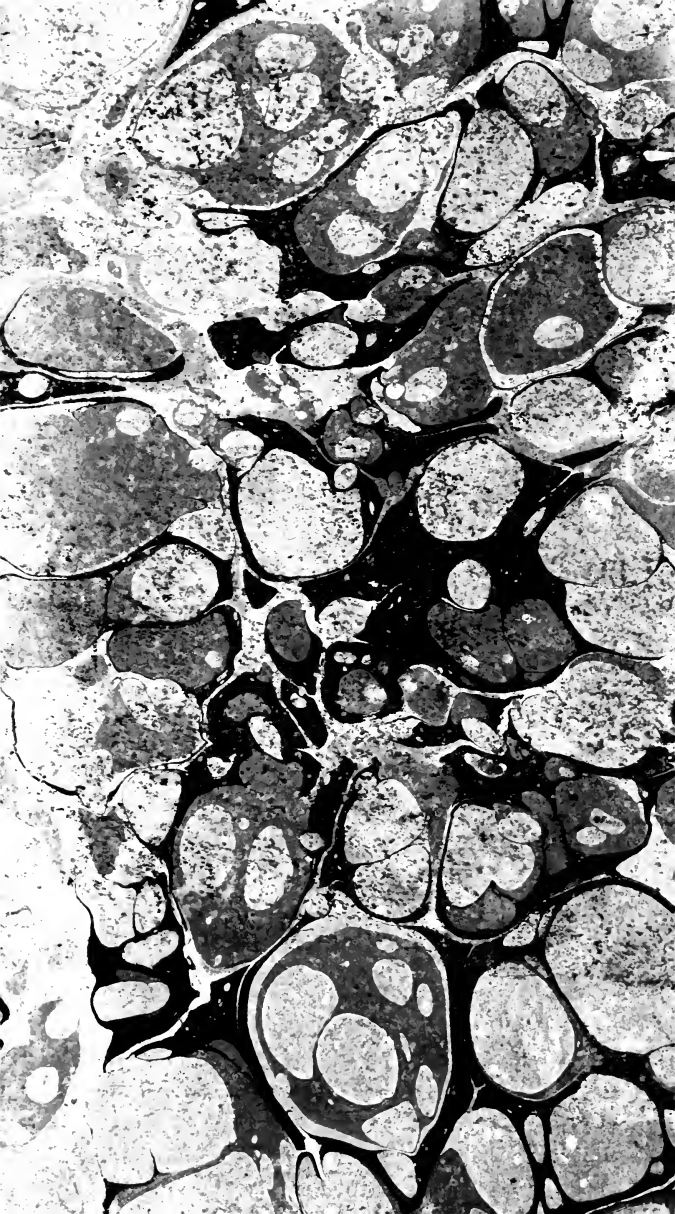
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